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LIFE OF RICHARD WAGNER:

BEING AN AUTHORISED
ENGLISH VERSION BY
WM. ASHTON ELLIS
OF C. F. GLASENAPP'S
"DAS LEBEN
RICHARD WAGNER'S."

VOL. III.

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PREFATORY NOTE.

OUGHT I to call the present volume an "English version" of Herr Glasenapp's work, seeing that its five hundred pages represent but a hundred of the German original? That is a question I must leave the reader to answer, though I promise that a similar expansion is not at all likely to occur in the remainder of my work. Were the whole body of Wagnerian documents destroyed save those relating to the years 1849 to 1852-3, from them alone we might reconstitute the import of his life. For this period, so rich in psychologic and æsthetic interest, so amply illumined by authentic records, many of them accessible only in quite recent days, I have therefore allowed myself the luxury of an unstinting hand. If my readers complain of too great length, they have their remedy—they need not read: for myself, I *had* to write.

WM. ASHTON ELLIS.

Horsted Keynes,
New Year, 1903.

CONTENTS OF VOLUME III.

THE OUTLAW (1849-1853).

PAGE

I. ART-WORK OF THE FUTURE.—To Paris once more ; Liszt's avant-courière; Meyerbeer alert.—"Let me be at home again somewhere!"—Zurich and valiant friends there.—"Art and Revolution."—Minna rejoins her husband.—"The Art-work of the Future."—Relation to Feuerbach.—"Wieland der Schmiedt" drafted for Paris.—Frau Julie Ritter.—Another fruitless stay in Paris ; French operatic plan abandoned.—Bordeaux and Villeneuve.—Back to Zurich 3

II. PRODUCTION OF LOHENGRIN.—Liszt's unique friendship.—*Lohengrin* to be given at Weimar.—"A new" Minna, and a new Zurich home.—Preliminaries of the Weimar production.—Representation and its effects.—The burning question of cuts.—Articles on *Lohengrin* by Liszt and his lieutenants.—Karl Ritter and the Zurich theatre ; invitation to young Hans von Bülow ; parental objections set at nought ; success and withdrawal.—Paris falls foul of the *Tannhäuser* overture ; Brussels nibbles at *Lohengrin*.—Waiting for a thaw 43

III. "OPERA AND DRAMA."—Proposed periodical "For Art and Life" ; "Art and Climate" ; embryo of "Life of the Future."—"Judaism in Music."—History and general range of "Opera and Drama."—Death of a domestic pet.—Search for a publisher.—"A Theatre at Zurich."—Letter to Liszt "On the Goethe-foundation."—Theodor Uhlig's visit.—"A Communication to my Friends" . 81

IV. FRANZ LISZT'S WEIMAR.—Liszt as "Kapellmeister in Extraordinary."—Princess Carolyne Sayn-Wittgenstein.—Bonds riven and riveted.—The princess settles down in Weimar.—Life at the Altenburg.—Literary collaboration.

PAGE

— Eilsen, near Bückeburg. — Carolyne versus "the institute."—Fourth and fifth performances of *Lohengrin*.—Strange history of the *Lohengrin*-analysis.—"The tragedy of the Altenburg": Rome 178

V. THE "STAGE-FESTIVAL" SCHEME.—*Siegfried's Death* to the fore again; "I will not compose its music in the sky." — First idea of a Festival-theatre. — Does Liszt seriously want the *Siegfried?* The poem read at Zurich.—Zigesar's offer at last; leads to birth of *Young Siegfried;* its poem still withheld from Weimar.—Diet for overtaxed nerves; water-cure at Albisbrunn; echoes from the Dresden revolt.—Conception of the four-part *Ring des Nibelungen* for a special four-days festival . . . 222

VI. ZURICH'S OPPORTUNITY. — New quarters at Zurich; water versus wine; a fallacious cure.—Georg Herwegh; his influence, literary and otherwise.—More Zurich friends and acquaintances: the ladies; Otto and Mathilde Wesendonck. — Concerts of the Zurich 'Panharmonic'; Spyri's friendly newspaper; an awe-struck committee.—Explanatory programme for the *Eroica*.—Conductor Abt's jealousy.—Festival-concert projected as part of a larger scheme; abandoned for lack of support.—Three more 'Panharmonic' concerts (early 1852): — Beethoven's Eighth and *Egmont;* secret of conducting. *Coriolanus* overture with printed explanation; attitude toward programme-music.—*Tannhäuser* overture; phenomenal reception; its explanatory programme under two aspects. — Minor articles: "On Musical Criticism"; "Baumgartner's Songs"; on interpreting Beethoven. — *Flying Dutchman* at the Zurich theatre: "if I must"; revised score; progressive success of a week of performances.—Tired out 263

VII. THE WOTAN DRAMA.—A winter of incubation.—Spring brings the drafting of *Rheingold* and *Walküre*.—A few weeks at the "Rinderknecht"; tiresome visitors; "diction" of *Die Walküre;* the poem written in a month. — Simplicity, unity and balance. — Siegmund versus Siegfried. Wotan's intensely human character. — Slackness at the Weimar theatre; Berlioz' *Cellini;* an olla podrida.—Liszt gives the *Faust* overture and *Liebesmahl;* Ballenstedt

PAGE

festival.—*Lohengrin* dedicated to Liszt; his lips unsealed. —A flying trip across the Alps; "peace I did not find" 319

VIII. CIRCULATION AT LAST. — Previous stagnation. — Roeckel's sister advocating *Tannhäuser*, little Schwerin follows Weimar and sets the ball rolling.—Niggardly fees; "hailstorm of scores."—Old defects at Dresden and Weimar prompt "Tannhäuser-guide"; Tichatschek's chagrin.—Contents of the brochure; effect on various conductors.—Wiesbaden success; the Leipzig "crew."—First act of Berlin farce. — Court-theatres and "Self-composing Kapellmeisters."—Middle-size cities; Breslau success.—Fétis delivers battle; Belloni urges another invasion of Paris; Liszt dissuades.—Dresden revives the opera; the King's intentions? Wagner's indifference; his prohibition of *Lohengrin*.—Richard Pohl a recruit.—Weimar "restores" *Tannhäuser*.—"I'm glad to see none of these performances" 351

IX. ROUNDING THE RING-POEM. — Nerve-troubles attend creation of two masterworks: Ninth Symphony and Ring-poem.—*Rheingold* commenced in a fog; interrupted by illness midway; finished early November.—*Rheingold* first conceived in three acts, without Freia. — The "Macbeth" among Wagner's dramas; the most perspicuous member of the *Ring;* Loge and Wotan.—*Rheingold* and Hafiz.—Holidays at Mariafeld; longing for rural ease.—Revision of "the two Siegfrieds": had the *Tod* been revised previous to 1852?—Original form of "young" *Siegfried.* Changes now made therein.—The "Gloaming of the Gods" eclipses "Siegfried's death"; old blemishes and new beauties.—Death of Uhlig leaves Wagner disconsolate 409

APPENDIX.

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES 469
INDEX 514

THE OUTLAW.

(1849-1853.)

Misswende folgt mir
wohin ich fliehe ;
Misswende naht mir
wo ich mich neige
. . . . . .
Friedmund darf ich nicht heissen ;
Frohwalt möcht' ich wohl sein :
doch Wehwalt muss ich mich nennen.

(Die Walküre, act i.)

I.

ART-WORK OF THE FUTURE.

To Paris once more; Liszt's avant-courière; Meyerbeer alert.—"Let me be at home again somewhere!"—Zurich and valiant friends there.—"Art and Revolution."—Minna rejoins her husband.—"The Art-work of the Future."—Relation to Feuerbach.—"Wieland der Schmiedt" drafted for Paris.—Frau Julie Ritter.—Another fruitless stay in Paris; French operatic plan abandoned.—Bordeaux and Villeneuve.—Back to Zurich.

> *My latest experiences have forced me on a path where I feel that I must bring the whole strength of my nature into play. Even four weeks since I had no presentiment of what I now recognise to be my highest task.*
>
> RICHARD WAGNER (letter to Wolff, May 29, 1849).

"You probably need no assuring, that no amnesty nor restitution in the world could induce me anywhere to become again what to my deepest suffering I was in Dresden." Thus Wagner writes to Uhlig precisely three months after shaking from his feet the dust of the Saxon capital, where he had felt the personal "catastrophe brewing in every limb" for nearer two years than one. It had been a moral degradation, that squandering of all his powers on an absolutely hopeless endeavour to breathe life into a mummy like the House of Wettin's Royal Court-theatre. A quarter of a century hence, perhaps, the dead bones might begin to quiver; but what would have become of Richard Wagner's art meanwhile?

In this sense the political trouble in Saxony had been a perfect godsend. Painlessly, and without any of that humiliation which had attended all his later dealings with the Dresden management, it had removed him from an impossible situation, a post to which he had clung far more for Minna's sake than for his own. Outlawed, outcast, as penniless and almost as forlorn as in those earlier Paris years,—yet he was free and given back to

his own self, at the prime of manhood and the noon of his creative powers. A new epoch in his life had dawned; whatever might become of him, to one thing it should never come again: no more Court-theatre despotism should claim him as thrall.

Nevertheless there was *one* constraint to which, for very gratitude, he must gracefully submit: Liszt, his only lodestar in this troubled sea, had pointed to a shore long since renounced as altogether barren. Six years ago had Wagner written to humbler comrades in the French metropolis, "A truce to Paris!" Two years later, confronted with the hopelessness of all attempts to spread his works beyond the walls of Dresden, he had written to Gaillard, "Can it be that only through this Paris, after all, it is possible to react on Germany? When I allow my thoughts to dwell on Paris, I fall into a melancholy as though I had to sell my dear good mother." And yet it was Liszt, his "saviour," who insisted on his making Paris the pivot of a world-career; though he himself would infinitely rather "settle in a cottage by a wood at home, and let the Devil take his great World," for "I haven't the smallest wish to conquer it, since its possession would disgust me even more than its look" (first letter from Paris, June 5, 49).

In this instance the practical judgment of Wagner was wiser and surer than that of his world-travelled friend. He knew *himself*, and that sufficed to prove to him the bootlessness of this renewed attempt: Liszt knew but two operas of his, and judged his character as yet by a standard far too normal. But how could Wagner shew his friend that he was prepared for any sacrifice, to help support himself, if he refused compliance with the first piece of distasteful advice, so strenuously proffered? The impregnable must be attacked, and that in earnest. Though the intense heat on his four-days journey from Jena had inflamed his blood to such a point, that to take up his staff again at once would have meant a fit of apoplexy; though it also was necessary to wait for the return of an old acquaintance, Alexander Müller, through whom to procure a passport for France*—he cannot have rested more than three days at Zurich, where we left him

* Made out by Sulzer, and dated May 30, 1849, this pass describes Wagner as "Musical composer, of Leipzig: 36 years old; 5 ft 5½ in. high; hair brown, eyebrows brown, eyes blue; nose medium, mouth medium, chin round." The exact height is a detail of interest.

at the end of last volume. There he had his first opportunity of perusing Liszt's article on *Tannhäuser*, contributed to the *Journal des Débats* of May 18.

It was a curious coincidence: that article (subsequently incorporated in his *Lohengrin et Tannhäuser*) had been written by Liszt within five weeks of the opera's production in Weimar, at a time when Wagner still was Kapellmeister to the Saxon court—as proved by its printed date, "le 20 Mars"; yet Wagner, a fugitive with a warrant hanging over him, had been listening to Liszt's rehearsal of the opera on the very day the article appeared in the city whither he now was bound. Moreover, Berlioz, who some ten years hence was to adopt so disdainful an attitude towards him in that city, had prefaced the article with a few kindly introductory lines,* referring to the "brilliant position occupied by this young poet-composer at the side of Reissiger to-day"; a remark unconsciously ironical in a twofold sense. In those days printed matter took somewhat longer to travel than letters, so that Liszt, evidently apprised by Belloni of the article's ultimate appearance, had not received it when he set out for Jena to give Wagner his send-off; for he writes to his Princess Carolyne (letter 37, undated), "If by chance the Tannhäuser article is sent you to-day or to-morrow, please have it conveyed at once to his Highness [Her^{y} Gd Duke] without awaiting my return." The two persons principally interested had therefore no opportunity of discussing the article, either in manuscript or print, before their separation. It was a joyful surprise to Wagner, and his joy finds expression in the words: "You wished to describe my opera to the world, and instead of that, yourself have produced a veritable artwork!" The ruling of Chance seemed propitious; the iron must be struck while hot.

Poor Wagner, accordingly, had to pocket his antipathy and travel post-haste to the scene of earlier disappointments. There he must have arrived on June the 2nd or 3rd, for his letter to Liszt dated June 5 sums up experiences that can scarcely have been reaped in less than three days, and he talks of Belloni's having called on him "each day" to conduct him "on the path-

* See Appendix. The musical feuilleton of the *Débats* being Berlioz' own department, there can be no possible doubt that the signature of this prefatory note, "H. B.," is his. Presumably Liszt had sent the article to him in March.

ways of Parisian fame." Another month of contrasts: from May 2, when "a revolution is imminent" in Dresden; through a week of the din of arms; a fortnight of broken rest, with a *Tannhäuser* rehearsal as interlude; ten days of more or less uninterrupted skeltering over Western Europe; to June 2 (?) with its "gruesome Paris lying on me like a ton-weight." How his thoughts must have reverted to his *Flying Dutchman*, finished here "seven years" ago—eternal Wanderer!

Of course the article in the *Débats* was viewed by the Meyerbeer clique as part of a deliberate conspiracy, and "our friend regards the coincidence as of the very blackest dye." That the two protagonists actually met in Paris on this occasion, is not quite evident. Were it so, it can only have been by the purest accident, and upon the most distant of terms. But it was impossible to walk an inch without stumbling across some of great Giacomo's acquaintances, or jackals. If proof were needed of the instinctiveness of the Saxon's aversion to the Hebrew composer and all his ways, it would be fully supplied by his taking this scarcely politic opportunity of reading Liszt an admonition: "My dear good Liszt, you really must make up your mind about this man! Can you be unaware that natures like his are diametrically opposed to yours and mine; that between you and him there can exist but one tie, knit on your side by magnanimity, on his by shrewdness? M. is *little*, through and through, and unfortunately there's not a single person I meet now who would go out of his way to dispute it." Yet, "little" in one dimension, in another Meyerbeer was big: he had intrigue and a liberal purse. As for intrigue, Wagner declares, "Were that the only road for me, I'd pack my traps to-morrow and make straight for some German hamlet." As for money, that is out of his reach; Belloni himself, Liszt's confidential agent, informs him that "he must have as much, in fact *more* than Meyerbeer—or else, he must make himself feared." A little "artistic terrorism," then, appears to be the only resource; for that he has both will and matter, and is prepared to set to work next day and write a redhot article for a Parisian political newspaper on the "Theatre of the Future," with some scathing observations on the corruption of art in the Present—a project he carries out at Zurich, some six weeks later, with his *Art and Revolution*.

Were it not for Belloni, "a capital, most energetic fellow," and

one or two of his former comrades, this Paris stay would have been as maddening as that of ten years back, when he saw with dread "the dawn of every broiling day that rose to shine upon an empty stomach." Ernst Kietz was there (elder brother of Gustav), a link with the dreary past; and Gottfried Semper had lately arrived, pursued like himself by a warrant. In the pauses of his antechambering he could while away an hour at meal-times with these two, in a dingy cook-shop frequented by flymen and carters; for, despite Liszt's generosity, in Paris it was difficult to make ends meet.

Through Semper he heard alarming news of Heubner: that he had been condemned to death already, with a prospect of immediate execution of the sentence. As he phrases it in a letter to Uhlig next February, "it made his heart jump into his mouth." Though his acquaintanceship with that member of the defunct Provisional Government had been of the briefest duration, he could not stand idly by, without a hand stirred to avert such a judicial murder. To whom should he address himself, to intercede with the Saxon King on behalf of this high-minded captive? At last it occurred to him that one personage of influence in Dresden had always been kindly-disposed to him, the cultured wife of his quondam chief, Frau Ida von Lüttichau. From the country (whither we shall follow him in a moment) he wrote imploring her to go at once to his Majesty, in case the sentence had really been passed, and represent to him the value of the life at stake. The rumour turned out to be premature, but the letter itself gave origin a few months later to another report, namely that Wagner had petitioned the King in his own behalf—emphatically repudiated by the artist's remark to Uhlig that he "naturally did not say a single word about himself." If anybody still affects to regard the writer as a monument of selfishness, let him place this Heubner petition by side of that earlier one for Weber's heirs, each launched from the outskirts of Paris at a time when every thought was needed for his own relief.

After something like the first ten days of June had been consumed in paying calls in town on various people recommended by Liszt or Belloni—including Liszt's mother, with whom he is immensely pleased—Wagner consults his depleted exchequer, and takes a thrifty lodging at Reuil, near Belloni's summer quarters. From here he sends his "liege-lord" Liszt a letter (June 18) full of

the most piteous concern about his "poor wife." The silent month of separation from Minna has made him long for her with all his heart; let him but be granted a tiny home in Zurich, where he may have her by his side again! "In Paris, and without a home—in other words, content of heart—I cannot work. I *must* gain some new point where I may be at home, and feel at home. . . . The best I can do, I then will do—everything, everything! Only not to beat about in this big world—let me be at home again somewhere!" Perhaps the most strongly-marked feature in the personality of this world-commanding artist is his eternal yearning for a quiet and domestic nook, far from the madding crowd, the Flying Dutchman turned into Hans Sachs. "Quiet, rest! or I never can work for the world," is his constant refrain, to the end of his life. If he really must compose for Paris, why torture him with the constraint to live there? "There's no earthly use in my being in Paris at present: all I can do with it, is to write it an opera, and *that* can't be done in a jiffy. With luck I may have the poem in half a year, and in a year and a half the performance." But do let him get away to Zurich: "There I have a friend, Alexander Müller, who will help me arrange for a cheap abode etc.: if only I *can*, I shall go direct from here to there. When I have my wife with me, my work shall begin with a will. The sketch for my Paris subject I shall send from there to Belloni, who will get it put into French by Gustave Vaez. In October the latter should have finished his task; then I will leave my wife behind me for a little, go to Paris, do everything possible to procure a commission to compose the said subject, perhaps also conduct something, and return to Zurich to make the music. The interval I shall devote to the setting, at last, of my latest German poem, *Siegfried's Tod;* in half a year I shall send you that opera completed."

Man proposes, etc. For all this breathless energy, the "Paris subject"—*Wieland*, as it eventually turned out—was never set to music; nor was the earlier *Siegfried's Tod* itself. Other developments were to intervene.

With all these castles floating in the air, it is quite affecting to see how Wagner cleaves to that wife of his, who cannot understand him and throws cold water on his ardent schemes; a woman "seriously timorous and without exaltation," as he defines her in a letter to Liszt toward the end of July, though in the same breath

he exclaims "Give her back to me! and you give me all you possibly could wish me. And lo!—for *that* I should be *thankful* to you, eh! *thankful!*" Yet all this time was Minna cherishing the most stubborn reluctance to leave "the dregs of Dresden," whence she evidently sends her husband such a scolding that he follows up his letter of June 18 to Liszt by another on the 19th, withdrawing his prayer "for the present." Indeed poor penny-wise Minna would have tried the temper of a saint, and nothing could more clearly manifest the nobleness of her husband's character, than the infinite delicacy of all his allusions to her; only after a close comparison of facts and dates, are we supplied with a precipitant for the sensitive ink between the lines.

That second letter from Reuil, written under the shock of his four-weeks-silent wife's disheartening message, asks Liszt for "a little money to get away with—anywhither; perhaps after all to Zurich, to my friend Müller. I want to have peace, to write the sketch for Paris; I don't feel up to much just now. What good should I be in London yet? I'm good for nothing—at most for writing operas,—and that I can't in London." We fear, Liszt's knowledge of the British capital must have been somewhat vague, if he flattered himself that London was the least bit ripe for the composer of *Tannhaüser*. A quarter of a century hence, perhaps —that eternal quarter of a century, which we may easily double before we arrive at an approximate estimate of the length Richard Wagner stood ahead of his age.

So the London idea is abandoned, and Paris said goodbye to for the present. Back to Switzerland, with the aid of 300 francs from Liszt, is Wagner to go. Toward the end of June he leaves Reuil, to pass through Paris on his road to "peace." An hour before his departure for Zurich, the son of his old Dresden friend F. Heine comes to wish him God-speed, young Heine being also a fugitive.* "I was delighted beyond measure with the healthy, sensible young man," Wagner writes to his father soon after: "When he told me quite dryly that there was nothing to be done with Europe at present, so he was going to America, and father, mother and the chicks would follow in a year or two, I found it all so sensible and natural that I calmly took a pinch of snuff and said 'That's right!'" Wagner was always a good judge of

* Dresden infamy had made him the "inventor of a guillotine," just as it had been generous enough to credit Wagner with arson!

promise in youth, and Wilhelm Heine did not disappoint his expectations: a few years later we find him as master's mate, under Commodore Perry, in the North American expedition to the eastern coasts of Asia; in 1860 he induced Prussia to send an expedition into the same waters, and steered the first German vessel into the harbour of Yeddo; in the American Civil War he rose to the rank of Brigadier-General, and thereafter became United States Consul in Paris, and later in Liverpool, returning to Dresden in 1871, in the neighbourhood of which he died in 1886, after publishing a number of books of travel. His name is frequently mentioned in Wagner's letters to the young man's father, but he himself will not reappear in our story.

It was a refreshing send-off, to be ushered out of "the pestilential atmosphere of modern Babel" by this breezy sample of young Germany. "Like a dark shadow from a long-departed hideous past, had that Paris slid before me; a spectre of night, whose loathsome features scared me back to the fresh air of the Alps" (*P.* I. 382).

At the beginning of July he is in Zurich again, with no immediate prospect of conquering his wife's marked predilection for the Dresden "slough of bourgeois respectability and magnanimity." So he accepts the humble hospitality of Alexander Müller, and puts up on the third floor of the "Tannenberg" in the Rennweg, where he stays for full two months. A patriarchal old house (since pulled down), with overhanging upper storeys and iron cages to the windows of its lower, a stone bench under them beside the door. The room devoted to the master's use overlooked the "Fröschengraben," or Frog's Ditch — so called from the slimy malodorous water which there found its exit from the lake—now transformed into the Bahnhofstrasse; that room was the birthplace of *Art and Revolution.*

Müller, a native of Erfurt, had struck up friendship with Wagner at Wurzburg sixteen years ago; soon afterwards he had settled down in Zurich as music-master and conductor of a mixed choir. His family consisted of a wife and two very young daughters. Their father having to spend a good part of each day from home, giving lessons and so forth, these two little girls soon made great friends with Wagner, who often let them come and romp about his den: "But when he sat down to the piano, and gave rein to his musical fancies," says Frln Henriette, "I would huddle myself

up in a corner and listen amazed. He would ask if it pleased me; I shook my head perhaps, and he would begin again, till it enraptured even me. . . . The first time I ever saw papa in tears, was on the 22nd of July, when he received news of the death of his father; well do I recollect the comfort he then derived from the sympathetic presence of his friend Richard." Simply as it is told, it is a pretty little episode in the life of the world-compeller. As for Müller himself—who must not be confounded with Franz of that surname in Weimar—he was a "first-rate musician, a trusty and most devoted friend," as Wagner writes to Uhlig, "but become a shade impervious to new ideas through too much lesson-giving and a wearing malady."

There were other, newer friends in Zurich, a good deal more "pervious" to the new leaven, and highly praised by Wagner in the same letter to Uhlig (No. 9—Feb. '50). "My nearest are two through whose support, tendered in the most generous and delicate manner, I and my household have been kept during three whole months," after he had left his sanctuary with Müller. One of these two was a pupil of the latter, Wilhelm Baumgartner, pianoforte-teacher, "a man of sound and open mind, cheerful, uncommonly good-natured and eager to learn"; a young man whom Wagner subsequently rewards with a favourable review of his songs (p. 302 *inf.*). The other was Jakob Sulzer, "still in the twenties," like Baumgartner. Town-clerk to the canton of Zurich, "next to the mayor", Sulzer was able to be of great service to the exile through his influential position, as well as through his purse, whilst he brought to their personal intimacy "a philosophical and finely-cultured brain, the understanding of a noble, staunch and far-seeing Radical"; this friendship lasted till the master's death, as evidenced by a mass of unpublished letters, in which Wagner's brotherly "Thou" appears so early as Jan. '50. Besides these, we have "friends of second rank" in the Deputy Town-clerk Franz Hagenbuch, and B. L. Spyri, both "likewise in the twenties"; Spyri, afterwards himself Town Clerk, had been introduced by Sulzer to Wagner, and, although a Conservative, took every opportunity of advocating his interests in the *Eidgenössische Zeitung*, of which he now was editor. In course of the next few months this circle was extended to a number of more distant, yet congenial acquaintances, in whose company our hero often finds himself "stirred up almost more

than is good for him." It is a very different tale from that of the Dresden refrigerator: in the eyes of the sturdy Swiss the charm of Wagner's personality was simply enhanced by his outlawry.

In contrast to the native Swiss, "the only philistines I know here are the Saxon refugees." With these he came into contact at the Café Littéraire, on the Weinplatz, the point of reunion alike for Zurich liberals and a host of fugitives from every part of Germany, but Saxony and Baden in particular. The *Grenzboten* of the second week of October 1849 gives a lively picture of the company assembled in this Café, the landlord of which, a Herr Gross, enjoyed a certain political notoriety through having once rescued the democrat Robert Steiger from his prison in Lucerne. "The Saxons," so says that article, "here group themselves round Todt, ex-member of the Provisional Government; the man has much aged, and seeks in vain to stifle unpleasant voices within. Beside him crouches like a misdrawn mark of interrogation the pitiful figure of a quondam deputy, Jäckel of Dresden, fortunate possessor of the famous 'blue coat.' Kapellmeister Wagner, on the other hand, the gifted composer of *Tannhäuser*, swims valiantly atop the waves, and refuses to let himself be bowed by fate. With him enthusiasm was genuine, without twist or turning—of how many besides can one say as much?" That "swimming atop the waves" is an unusual stroke of insight for a minor journalist, and thoroughly describes Richard Wagner's position: curiously enough, he uses the selfsame words to Liszt on June the 5th, "One single piece of good news from Weimar, and I swim on the crest of the waves!"

There was not the smallest intention on his part to play the time-serving penitent, however little he mixed with the ruck of the Saxon refugees. *His* "enthusiasm had been genuine," and no sooner has he shaken down in Zurich, than he begins his "public protest against the momentary vanquishers of Revolution, from whom I had to strip at least that title of their dominance by which they styled themselves protectors of *Art*" (*P.* I. 382). Thus had he written to Liszt from Paris (June 5), "Apart from all political speculation, I feel compelled to cry aloud: On the soil of Anti-revolution no Art can flourish any more; on that of Revolution, too, it might not thrive at first, if one did not look to it in time. Out with it! I shall sit myself down to-morrow, and write a rousing article for some big political journal on the

Theatre of the Future. I promise you to leave politics as much out of count as I can, not to compromise you and others: but, for what concerns Art and the Theatre, I shall allow myself to be as red as possible, with due decorum; for here no other tint can help us, save an altogether positive one." Probably the matrix of this projected article is represented by the posthumous fragments on pages 362-3 of Vol. VIII. of the Prose Works; but the atmosphere of Paris and its environs was not conducive to a lengthy effort of the kind. One coincidence, however, the author himself remarks: "Thus did I become a writer once more, as formerly in Paris [1840-1] when I cast my aspirations for Parisian fame behind me and took up arms against the formalism of its art-display; only, I now had to direct my blows against this whole art-traffic in its interaction with the entire politico-social system of the modern world; and the breath I had to draw for that, must be deeper of draught" (*P.* I. 382).

In reality the fresh literary period had been coming on for the past twelvemonth, as we have already seen. Not a note of music had been written since the completion of *Lohengrin* in the spring of 1848, and everything was gradually tending to the phase through which we shall have to accompany our hero for the next two years or so. There was nothing sudden about it, at all. The 'Germanic Address' and the "Revolution" article in the *Volksblätter* constitute a perfect trio with this classic *Art and Revolution;* the same breath of poetry and exaltation inspires the three. Yet, under one important aspect this essay differs from its earlier compeers; for all the dithyrambic form of its expression, it is settling toward the definite purpose of a whole career. 'Tis no ephemeral production, but the corner-stone of Wagner's future edifice of thought and work. Thirty years later he says, "Since those thoughts first occurred to me, neither life nor the concessions it has wrung from me have been able to wean me from assurance of the rightness of my views anent the woeful defects in the relation of Art to this Life itself" (*P.* VI. 114). Here, it is true, the whole scheme is fathered by the expectation of an instant Revolution that shall embrace the civilised World itself, and shatter Society to its ultimate foundations. In time the author recognises that that hope was a chimera, and, as Mr H. S. Chamberlain has put it in his "*Richard Wagner*," the panacea of Revolution is next replaced by that of

Reformation, and finally Regeneration. But, whatever the means envisaged, the longed-for end remains the same, the awakening, if not creating, of a *community* self-pledged to raise Life and Art in common to a higher plane.

How seriously, how impassionedly he faces the problem in this *Art and Revolution!* And yet with such consummate mastery of the writer's craft, that its later fellow *On State and Religion* (1865) alone can rival it in German prose—if we except Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy*, which owes to this its origin. The problem Wagner here propounds, is "to discover the meaning of Art as a factor in the life of the State": its solution, that—the spirit of Revolution being that "instinct which demands a worthy taste of the joys of life"—"it is for Art to teach this social impulse its noblest meaning, and guide it toward its true direction. But only on the crest of this great social movement can true Art lift itself from its present state of civilised barbarity, and take its post of honour. Each has a common goal, and the twain can only reach it when they recognise it jointly: *The strong fair Man*, to whom *Revolution* shall give his *strength*, and *Art* his *beauty*" (*P.* I. 56). Back to ancient Greece has he gone, to prove that his ideal is no impossibility; but without a general and earnest thirst for Art, art cannot flourish: "The greatest and the noblest minds—whom Æschylus and Sophocles would have greeted with the kiss of brotherhood—for centuries have raised their voices in the wilderness. . . . What serves it us, that SHAKESPEARE, like a second creator, has opened up the endless realm of human nature? What, that BEETHOVEN has lent to Music the manly independent strength of Poetry? . . . We tremble at their name, but mock their art. We admit their rank as artists of lofty aim, but rob them of the realisation of their art-work. For the one great genuine work of art they cannot bring to life unaided: we, too, must help them in its birth. *The tragedies of Æschylus and Sophocles were the work of Athens*" (ibid. 46). There's the rub: "With the Greeks, Art lived in the public conscience; whereas to-day it lingers in none but the conscience of private persons, the public *un*-conscience recking nothing of it. Therefore in its flowering time Greek Art was *conservative*, because it was a worthy and adequate expression of the public conscience: with us true Art is *revolutionary*, because its very existence is opposed to the ruling spirit of the community" (*ibid.* 51). Yet it is no "foolish attempt at restoration of a sham

Greek mode of art," that Wagner advocates: "Only *Revolution*, not slavish *Restoration*, can give us back that highest Art-work. The task we have before us is immeasurably greater than that fulfilled in days of old. If the Grecian Artwork embraced the spirit of a beauteous nation, the Art-work of the Future must embrace the spirit of a free mankind, beyond all bounds of nationality; its racial imprint must be no more than an embellishment, the charm of varied individuality, no hampering barrier" (*ibid.* 53-4).

And the more intimate relation of this future Art to future Life of everyday? "Whatsoever we deem the goal of life, to that we train ourselves and children. The Goth was bred to war and chase, the genuine Christian to abstinence and humility: the liegeman of the modern State is bred to seek industrial gain, even in art and science. But when life's maintenance no longer is the aim of life, and the Freeman of the Future finds the means of life assured beyond a doubt by natural and moderate activity; in short, when Industry no longer is our mistress, but our handmaid: then shall we set the aim of life in joy at life, and strive to rear our children to full capacity of its truest enjoyment. . . . Each human being, in one sphere or the other, will be in truth an artist; the diversity of natural likings will build up arts in manifold variety, in fulness hitherto undreamt. And just as human Knowledge will finally attain religious utterance in the active knowledge of a free united Manhood, so all these rich developments of Art will find their eloquent assembly-point in Drama, in the glorious human Tragedy. . . . This Art will be *conservative* anew. Yet truly of its own immortal force, will it maintain itself and bloom afresh; not merely cry for maintenance on pretext of some outward-lying aim. For mark ye, *this* Art makes no pursuit of *Money*" (ibid. 58-9). With these last words we have the secret of the essay: Art is to be divorced from all idea of Commerce; no payment shall there be for its enjoyment; but, as in the noblest times of Greece, the whole community shall share unstintedly in the creations of its units. And so, in that prophetic freedom which places genius above all cavil of irreverence, the author closes with the bold apostrophe: "Thus *Jesus* would have shewn us that we all alike are men and brothers; and *Apollo* would have stamped this bond of brotherhood with the seal of strength and beauty, have led mankind from doubt of its own

worth to knowledge of its highest godlike power. So let us raise the altar of the future, in Life as in the living Art, to the two sublimest teachers of mankind :—*Jesus, who suffered for the human race, and Apollo who uplifted it to joyous dignity!*"

No extracts can do justice to a masterpiece in which each syllable depends for its effect on all the context; yet the above may fairly indicate the line along which the author's mind was expanding since recent disturbances. It only remains to note the essay's outer history. We have already seen that it was originally projected in Paris, for a French political journal. To Paris it accordingly was sent towards the end of July, to be translated for a feuilleton in the *National;* but the editor ultimately returned it as "unintelligible, in any case quite out of place." Meantime the author had revised his manuscript for Germany, and sent it August 4 to Liszt, asking him to forward it with a covering letter to Otto Wigand, publisher in Leipzig, for appearance as a separate pamphlet. It must have been issued somewhere about the end of October ; for in November its author tells Uhlig that, although he has not yet received a copy himself, he has looked through one belonging to a friend, and found it full of terrible misprints. Misprints notwithstanding, it is strange to hear Liszt echoing the French complaint just two years later, and confessing to non-comprehension.

A day or two after despatching to Liszt the manuscript of *Art and Revolution*, Wagner receives from him at last the scores his wife had sent two months ago from Dresden. To Liszt "the separation from *Lohengrin* was hard to bear," though he at first had found "its colouring too ideal." Even now he has "some doubts as to a thoroughly satisfactory result in performance"; yet "the more I have penetrated into its conception and masterly elaboration, the higher has risen my enthusiasm for this extraordinary work." To Wagner it was absolutely essential to have his scores back, "to set the bell swinging again"; and with that purely objective fashion he had of regarding his own work, he writes Uhlig a day or two after, "I have glanced through *Lohengrin* at the piano, and cannot at all describe to you the wonderfully moving effect this work of mine has had on me." Similarly he assures Liszt that he himself has sometimes had his doubts of a satisfactory effect in performance: "I think, however, if only the representation itself entirely corresponds with my

colouring, all will go well—even the close. Here 'tis a question of *daring*"—sister Rosalie's old admonition.

But there was a more material side to this recovery of the *Lohengrin* score: "I'm hoping to pawn it here for a couple of hundred gulden,* so that I may have money enough for myself and wife for the next few months at least." And yet a third aspect it has for him. It reminds him that Uhlig had already commenced a pianoforte score; his young friend will now have to get old Fischer to borrow for him that copy still reposing idly in the Dresden Court-theatre's strong-box. With a letter to this effect, and much more besides, begins (Aug. 9) that correspondence to which we owe so intimate a knowledge of the side of Wagner's present activity with which Liszt displays small sympathy as yet, namely his literary theorisings. A lop-sided correspondence, as published, for none of Uhlig's letters have come down to us; but from Wagner's round hundred to him, in three years and a half, we may judge the inestimable boon it was to have at least one appreciative reader. And Uhlig helped to the best of his ability, taking up the cudgels in defence of Wagner's theories and their exposition; though it can scarcely be said that his contributions to the *Neue Zeitschrift* and *Deutsche Monatsschrift* throw light on his leader's occasional obscurities, or add much in the way of original thought. Still, a devoted lieutenant had been found, and that is always half the battle. A stimulator too; for it is Uhlig we have to thank for the instigation to publish *Die Wibelungen*, that series of studies in connection with *Friedrich Rothbart* which we reviewed at length in volume ii.

For his own part, Wagner was burning to commit to paper a far more important thesis, *The Art-work of the Future*—to which his *Art and Revolution* had merely been the passionate exordium; but outward circumstances deprived him for the present of the necessary quiet. He had recently left the shelter of friend Müller in the "Tannenberg," whom he hardly could burden with the support of *two*, and temporarily removed to the "Acacia" on the Schanzengraben, where the only place to write in was a general sitting-room. It is difficult to picture him engaging in any kind of literary occupa-

* And pawned, in a sense, it was; for Wagner writes to Fischer on August 10, "300 gulden has been advanced to me on the score of *Lohengrin*"—presumably by Sulzer.

tion, with other inmates constantly dropping in for a look at the newspapers, or what not; but he managed somehow to revise his *Wibelungen* draft throughout, squeezing in a little 'doctrine' here and there, and despatch it to Uhlig for publisher Wigand on September 19.

Meanwhile his wife had rejoined him, at the beginning of the month, after a four-months separation; his wife whom Liszt's pecuniary aid had enabled alike to undertake the journey and save a few cherished household effects, including the grand piano, for their prospective new home; alack! his wife who even in this fortnight "is already ashamed of our stay in Zurich, and thinks we ought to make everybody believe we are in Paris." O Minna, Minna! For all that, "I can't be really doleful, especially as my wife is with me and I'm relieved of anxiety for the next few months"—due to the *Lohengrin* transaction—"so I feel as jolly as a dog that has got over its whipping." There are plans, too, for a "private—but well-paid—reading of my latest opera-poems in the autumn, and to give a concert later with selections from my compositions"—plans as to which we know nothing further, though we do hear on November 20 of "a concert to-day, in which will be given the big duet from the second act of the *Holländer*, also a fantasia for pianoforte and clarinet on themes from *Tannhäuser*"; the exclusively Wagnerian concert did not come off till over three years later.

By the end of September, in spite of Minna's hankering after Paris, they had taken a *very* modest ground-floor—Wagner's first real home of his own in Zurich—No. 182 in the hinder Escherhäuser, off the Zeltweg, commune of Hottingen. Rather a comfortless abode in winter, for it rebelled against attempts at heating, and in November we find its tenant jocularly remarking to Uhlig that, what with the Paris project and his desire to begin a true artistic task, he is "hanging twixt heaven and hell; with a strong inclination to cast myself into the latter, where at least I should keep warm in the winter." Poor fellow! he is shorn of "a warm overcoat" into the bargain, as we learn from a letter to Liszt, since his wife had discarded his old one at Dresden as really too disreputable. In consequence his ancient winter foes return, particularly rheumatism, which this time makes an inroad on his heart.

But that is anticipating a little. Before winter set in for good,

Wagner had completed the second of his Zurich prose-works, that famous *Art-work of the Future* whose title was to be maliciously perverted into "Music of the Future" for the damning of himself and all his artist friends. As he informs Uhlig in a letter of October 26, "for the past two or three weeks, i.e. since my new home has got straight, I have been seized with such a fury for another literary work, that even to-day I can't afford the time to write a decent letter. . . . This opuscule I hope to be able to send off by the end of November. . . . In any case it will be at least three times as long as the earlier brochure; but I confidently hope its interest will be nothing transient, but full of fruit for long to come." In a previous letter, Sept. 16, he had given Uhlig a fuller hint of his purpose: "*Art and Revolution* is simply a forerunner. So soon as I can get to work again, I shall follow it up with a more detailed treatise on *The Art-work of the Future;* to which a third, *The Artists of the Future*, shall form a sequel later on. . . . It is absolutely necessary for me to accomplish this work, and send it into the world. Before I can get on with my immediate artistic creation,* I myself, and those who interest themselves in my artistic doings, must come to a precise understanding about our aims." Nov. 20 he writes to old Fischer, "I have just completed my *last* literary work," and about the same date its manuscript accompanies a letter to Uhlig, for despatch to the publisher: so that in less than eight weeks his epoch-making *Art-work of the Future* is off his hands.

Half of the title of this truly revolutionary work is borrowed, if proprietorship can be said to attach to so obvious an epithet, from Ludwig Feuerbach, who with his school had already used it in such connections as "Philosophy of the Future," "Religion of the Future," and so on. Still smaller was Wagner's debt in other respects, though he prefaces his new book (orig. ed.) with a dedication "To Ludwig Feuerbach, with grateful esteem," commencing thus: "To no one but yourself, honoured Sir, can I dedicate this book; for, in offering it you, I restore to you your own property. Only in so far as that property has become not

* The music to *Siegfried's Tod*, for which he is "yearning with the deepest sincerity of heart."—The "third essay," on the "Künstlerschaft der Zukunft," never shaped into separate form; but the concluding chapter of *The Art-work* may be said to represent the author's tentative elaboration of a theme which we shall catch sight of again in *A Theatre at Zurich*.

your own, but that of the *artist*, must I be uncertain how I ought to approach you: whether you would be inclined to receive back from the hand of the artistic man what you, as philosophic man, have bestowed upon him."

And *who* was Feuerbach?—the reader well may ask. It is one of the ironies of history, that a speculative philosopher, whose name was known all over Europe not half a century ago, should have so completely faded from the general memory that one is obliged to appeal to the wellnigh forgotten fact that no less a writer than "George Eliot" (under her own name of Marian Evans) once took the trouble to render into English his *Essence of Christianity*. For our purpose, suffice it to say that Feuerbach was the leading light of the neo-Hegelians; unlike his master, however, he owed his reputation rather to terseness and polish of style, than to any real originality or profundity of thought. Like Nietzsche, he was an adept in the art of Aphorism. A little Feuerbach is certainly invigorating—till one has discovered the trick of his sentences; a longer course of Feuerbach is irritating to the nerves, from his constant implicit demand to grant him some fresh premise. As for the substance of his works, from the name of his translator it will have already been guessed that that was mainly Positivism.

Now, Wagner was in the position of having dipped into a volume of this second-rate philosopher's just about the time of finishing the revision of his own *Art and Revolution;* in its covering letter to Wigand, his publisher (also F.'s), he expresses his regret that he has "been unable to make acquaintance here as yet with more than the third volume of Feuerbach's works, containing the Thoughts on Death and Immortality." That little was quite enough to leave a mark upon his style—by no means to its advantage, as syllogisms need expert handling—but had no perceptible effect upon his matter. His dedication therefore is one of those gratuitous expandings of the heart so frequent with him: Feuerbach's essay (one of his earliest and best) had supplied him with a stimulus, and he pours out thanks with no grudging hand. Yet those who are so ready to write down Wagner a mere strip of absorbent lint, might have paused to consider the words "Insofar as that property has become not your own, but that of the *artist*." Feuerbach, unlike Schopenhauer, was no great student of Art, and would have been the last to claim any of the

æsthetic ideas in *The Art-work of the Future* as his property: in fact, he replies to the author's compliment, that "for his part, he has read the book with constantly-increasing interest, nay, rapture, and his only sentiment about the dedication must needs be that of most joyful thanks." All Wagner had borrowed from the Bruckberg hermit was a handful of abstract or metaphysical terms —catch-words, in fact, that read glibly enough, but so far cloud the meaning that the author apologetically prefaces the republication of his work in 1872 by a miniature glossary. Thank goodness, Wigand did not take the hint expressed above, and the greater half of Wagner's Zurich writings was finished before he had the opportunity of drugging himself with a larger dose of L. Feuerbach's granulated effervescents.

Our hero would not have been a German, had he not succumbed from time to time to the national craving for wordy abstractions—a craving better understood in Scotland than in any other portion of the British isles. In his youthful days we found him "tripped by Schelling's Transcendental Idealism." In his lighter Paris articles the name of Hegel appears at times, but so casually that it might just as well be Timbuctoo: not till the Dresden period, does he seem to have devoted some study to a philosopher whose praises were continually being sung to right and left of him. Not to remain out in the cold when such knotty topics were warming the throats of his associates like an inner 'comforter,' he tried his best to fan up some enthusiasm for a self-appointed task, and the attempt is thus described by our old friend Pecht: "Calling on him one day, I found him hard at work on Hegel's *Phänomenologie*, about which he was all fire and flame. As a specimen that had greatly impressed him, he read me out one sentence. Not altogether understanding it, I begged him to read it once more; when *neither* of us understood it. So he read it a third, and yet a fourth time; till we looked straight in each other's eyes and burst out laughing: which was the end of that Phenomenology." Years afterwards, in his *German Art and German Policy*, Wagner refers to Hegel's as "a system which has succeeded in so incapacitating German brains for grasping the mere problem of Philosophy, that it has since been accounted the correct philosophy to have no philosophy at all" (*P.* IV. 53). After his failure with Hegel, the silvered pills of Feuerbach must have come as a pleasant relief; but there was no solid support in them,

and the result was an unfortunate infliction of alien phraseology upon thoughts already intimately akin, though quite unwittingly, to those of Schopenhauer. In one respect alone can Feuerbach's system be sighted in this *Art-work of the Future*, namely in the glorification of the Natural man and the derivation of everything from the spirit of Community, or, as it is here so frequently expressed, "the Folk." But that was rather the bond of sympathy that had drawn one thinker toward the other, than any borrowing of ideas.

A communistic artwork! So far as the *arts* themselves are concerned, not only is the idea quite feasible, but the author has realised it to the full in his own later practice. We have no space to follow him through arguments derived from "Man and Nature," or his flaming denunciation of the harm Art has suffered, as a whole, by her severance into art-varieties each going its separate selfish way. Man being a complex being, with eye and ear as chief reporters to his brain, the one conveying it the outer, the other the inner message, Wagner insists that in the perfect Artwork eye, ear and brain, shall be jointly ministered to,—in other words, Gesture, Music and Poetry shall *combine* on equal terms, though with finely-graded variations of intensity; whilst the arts of Sculpture (represented by Grouping and Pose), Painting and Architecture, shall each contribute of their best. So far, the Communistic scheme is proof against all disputation. But so soon as we cease to regard these arts as mythic entities, the problem bristles with difficulties. Granted that the community may be bred to demand the highest form of art as the very breath of its nostrils, and that the "fellowship of artists" may sink its petty rivalries in working for a common end, we still are faced with the question, Who is to supply the point of union, the controlling aim —who, in a word, is to *create* the work of art the others are to feed, embellish, and display? Here none but a masterful and many-sided *individuality* can avail, unless the art-work is to revert to its most primitive of forms; and, for the general understanding of his essay, it would have been better that its author should have allowed himself an apparent inconsistency, than that he should have closed it with that inconclusive chapter on "The Artist of the Future."

In that chapter we have a kind of shorter catechism: "*Who*, then, will be the *Artist of the future?*—Without a doubt, the

Poet"—a footnote stating that, "whether personally or by fellowship, the *Tone*-poet must be regarded as included in the *Word*-poet"; to which, in itself, no exception can be taken. But the catechism proceeds: "And *who* will be the poet?—Indisputably the *Performer*.—Yet *who*, again, will be the Performer?—Necessarily the *Fellowship of all the artists*." Allowance is certainly made for "the might of Individuality"; but, singular to say, it is placed in the hands of the actor, or performer (*Darsteller*),* and, owing to a too consistent effort to maintain everything on a republican footing, "each separate member of the fellowship may raise himself to temporary exercise of this dictatorship, when he bears a definite message which so far answers to his individuality that he is able to raise it to a common purpose," and so on (*P.* I. 200). For an ordinary Charade this might do very well; but, considering the high perfection of the Artwork contemplated in the preceding chapter, it does seem to be stretching the principle of Communism a little too far, seriously to imagine that any satisfactory result could thus arise.

It is in this respect that *The Art-work of the Future* must ever be a work apart, a dream of intellectual harmony too great for man to compass. Without a *company* of geniuses—such, indeed, as Wagner just now was sanguine enough to expect from "the life of the future"—its unqualified realisation could never come

* That this was seriously meant, is proved by a passage in the letter of Dec. 27 to Uhlig: "Had I as much voice as in my younger days, I should straightway have become performer. As performer, and poet, and musician, in one, I would set about revolutionising the whole Drama, even though the wind refused to blow; for who should have the practical force for it, save only the Performer? Think of it! if Tichatschek had my bundle of sticks in addition to his own, or I his voice, how would it stand with the Theatre to-day!"—and another in that to Liszt of July 1850 (No. 35 in the *Correspondence*): "The *performer* alone is the real true artist. All our poetising and composing is nothing but *will*-ing, not *can*-ing. Believe me, I should be ten times happier, were I *dramatic performer*, instead of dramatic poet and composer. . . . Hopelessly run to seed as is our whole Comedianism, yet the best soil for all art is still to be found among these silly actors and singers: their nature, provided they have kept a scrap of heart, is indestructible: through enthusiasm one can make anything out of them." In 1871 we have a variant of the same idea, in Wagner's definition of the Shakespearian Drama as "a fixed mimetic improvisation of the highest poetic value" (*P.* V. 144 *et seq.*), evidently revived in his mind by the re-perusal of these essays of 1849 for publication in the *Gesammelte Schriften*.

to pass. Given the commanding mind, it is easy to grant the following: "When once the artist has raised his aim to a *common* one by the force of his own enthusiasm, the artistic enterprise itself becomes *an enterprise in common*," for Wagner himself has proved at Munich and Bayreuth the power of enthusiasm to convert a congeries of conflicting interests into a true "artistic fellowship." But, however much the commander may sink his personality in the aim pursued, the rank and file will never move as one man save at the quickening voice of a heaven-born leader. The Art-work of the Future, in the sense originally intended, must wait for the most unparalleled of Revolutions, that which shall turn the generality of human beings into geniuses (see *P.* I. 288-91).

Thoroughly to profit by this pregnant treatise, then, we should have to glide swiftly past its opening chapter, as too strongly tinged with Feuerbachisms, and its finale as too hastily conceived on quixotically republican lines. The bulk of the work, the three great chapters that lie between, will then remain a monument outvieing Lessing's *Laokoon*, adorned with the choicest imagery and wit. Nor was the author himself unconscious of the chinks in his armour: sending the manuscript to Uhlig, he says, "I don't feel inclined to make any changes. When one has got a thing of this kind off the stocks, one must let it be: merits and defects for the most part bear a due relation to each other." But the root-idea, that of the union and communion of arts and artists in the perfect Drama, to be set before a public capable of receiving it as "the satisfaction of its highest common need," to *that* "artistic ideal I have ever since held fast, under whatsoever outward form, as my most intimate acquirement, the sole true outcome of a labour taxing all my strength"—the author tells us in his preface of 1872 (*P.* I. 29).

That this immortal part of *The Art-work* was understood at once, even by sympathetic friends, would be a great deal too much to say. We need waste no time on those children of darkness, the ordinary professional musician and journalist, who pounced upon the book to tear a random sentence into shreds, without the smallest penetration of its kernel; but Uhlig, faithful Uhlig, barely dug below the surface, and other writers in the *Neue Zeitschrift*—then being converted by well-meaning Brendel into a self-styled organ of reform and advance — absolutely tortured the master with their parroting of phrases blindly pecked

from here or there. That Liszt himself had no taste for *Art and Revolution*, we have already seen; but, had not so exemplary a witness as Hans von Bülow recorded it,* it would be incredible that in the Weimar *Lohengrin* year Princess Wittgenstein should have scouted all reference to the artist's literary works with "*Ah, monsieur, ne me parlez pas de ces grosses bêtises!*"—between the puffs of a gigantic cigar—whilst Adolf Stahr "was so moved by a rehearsal of *Tannhäuser* that he fell to weeping and sobbing like a child . . . but cannot bear *The Art-work of the Future*, and has lately written begging Wagner to make his propaganda with operas, not theories."

During this first spell of literary work at Zurich, late summer and autumn 1849, the letters from Liszt had been few and somewhat chilling; after the end of July came a pause of three months, followed by another of almost equal duration. To some extent this silence may be attributable to Wagner's lukewarmness about that plaguy Paris scheme; but there was another, a more intimate reason. Liszt had troubles of his own to bear. Not only was the young daughter of the Princess Wittgenstein seriously ill, necessitating a prolonged absence from Weimar, but the mother herself was in a state of constant agitation owing to the eternal obstacles raised by her Russian connections to her divorce from her husband and marriage to Liszt. In a future chapter it will be necessary to go more minutely into the history of Liszt's monopolising by this chaste but impassioned lady; for the present, suffice it to say that the monopoly had commenced *before* he and Wagner drew closer together, and Princess Carolyne had no intention of letting it be seriously infringed. The financial position also was embarrassing: though the princess still had ample means of her own, however curtailed, Liszt himself, with fresh expenses, was far poorer than in the days when his ten fingers were his bank; whilst there were always his mother and three children in Paris to support. In these circumstances he was able to do nothing for his friend in the pecuniary way before the end of the year: Wagner writes on October 14, begging for some assistance to be found him; but Liszt is compelled to bid him wait till Christmas.

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* *Briefe* I. 236 and 342 (Breitkopf und Härtel, 1895).

A deal of malignant fuss has been made about these repeated requests for money, though, at least in his early Zurich period, Wagner certainly cannot be accused of personal extravagance. How was he to earn anything for himself? Reserving Paris for later inquiry, what was there for him to do? He himself suggests to Liszt that some enlightened being (Carolyne?) should buy *Lohengrin* outright, and commission him to compose the music for *Siegfried's Tod* "on the cheap." It really was the most practical of all conceivable means of raising the wind; but Liszt points out the present impossibility of finding a purchaser, since "these works are only fit for Germany, and *officially* your name is not just now in favour" (Oct. 28). Liszt also, unfortunately, is right in the main; but he makes an alternative suggestion that savours strongly of a female prompter (this being one of the very few *French* letters he addresses to Wagner): he asks him if he "can't bring out a set of vocal compositions—songs or ballads, or that sort of thing?" reminding him that Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert and Rossini, had not been ashamed to do work of the kind, and ignoring the fact that Richard Wagner was essentially a dramatist. To Wagner, in the midst of his *Art-work of the Future*, with its repudiation of the separate art-varieties, the advice must have come as an assault on his principles. Another suggestion made by Liszt, is that Wagner should give concerts in Zurich. Though it must have been a little galling to have the proposal accompanied with the remark, "Your personal dignity, so it seems to me, need in no way suffer by such a step," Wagner honestly attempts to comply with it, albeit the musical pulse of Zurich is by no means dangerously rapid. He has been approached, in fact, by the local concert-union, with the request to conduct a Beethoven Symphony and a composition of his own, to be followed by a Benefit; but the necessity of reinforcing a very feeble orchestra will probably delay the thing until about the time when Belloni desires his presence in Paris for a performance of the *Tannhäuser* overture by the Conservatoire (?) band. Liszt, however, does not confine himself to more or less infeasible suggestions: with characteristic selflessness he proposes to conduct a festival concert in the Spring at Hamburg (where Johanna Wagner is now engaged) and quietly devote part of the takings to his friend's relief. Wagner's letter of reply is full of the sincerest gratitude, albeit he does not conceal from either himself or his correspon-

dent the fact that the latter is scarcely at one with him on every point. Nothing could be more straightforward and manly, as addressed to a past and prospective benefactor, than the following passage: "Seeing how I am constituted, and again how you yourself are, I understand more clearly every day what a rare degree of friendship and goodwill toward me must dwell in you, that, in spite of so many sides of my nature which certainly cannot quite please you, you yet devote to me the most active sympathy of all my friends. In this you resemble the sterling poet who takes every manifestation of life, with complete impartiality, for what it is in essence."

It had been an earlier desire of Liszt's, that Wagner should try his luck in London. With a renewal of the Paris plan—for it is to that we are gravitating—Wagner now has serious thoughts of combining a descent upon London, but solely with the object of getting his latest-finished opera performed at last: "I cannot let my *Lohengrin* mildew thus. Latterly I have accustomed myself to the idea of introducing it to the world in a foreign tongue, and so I hark back to your earlier notion of having it translated into English, to facilitate a first performance in London: I'm not afraid that the English will not understand this opera, and I should be prepared for a little alteration." It is flattering to think that our insular intelligence was rated so high by the composer—*before* he made our philistine acquaintance; but it was a reckoning without the host, for "he doesn't know a soul as yet in London." In his answer (Jan. 14. 50) Liszt himself has fears of *Lohengrin* for our metropolis—his "earlier notion" had evidently been conceived before he saw the score—but he promises to write to Chorley, little foreseeing that he will be one of the two most truculent enemies of Wagner when he does set foot in London five years later.—To cut a long story short, the London idea is abandoned.

We return to the Paris project. For months it had been weighing on Wagner like an incubus. It prevented his setting to work on his German *Siegfried*, yet brought him no inspiration for the French; and to this cause we largely owe his recent literary labours, undertaken as if to scare away the bugbear. But he had promised Liszt to write an opera for Paris, and fulfilment could not be decently staved off much longer, especially as his wife was eternally pestering him with aspirations for "Parisian

fame."* What subject should he choose for Paris, then? His studies in Dresden had "borne him back to ancient Greece," and with Hellenic art and life we have seen him much preoccupied in *Art and Revolution:* would Achilles serve him for the hero of an opera? That the idea was seriously contemplated, indeed had taken strong hold of his mind, we know not only from various references in the letters to Uhlig, but from a hint or two in the posthumous papers: in all likelihood it was engendered by the French time-honoured love of "classic" subjects. But Wagner seems to have found it impossible to treat *Achilleus* in any save a mode that would scarcely comply with Paris canons.—His *Jesus of Nazareth?* For a moment he actually thinks of offering *that*, though more out of bravado than anything else; it would be such an easy way of washing his hands of a wholly repugnant affair. Yet no: a substantial sacrifice of his own inclinations must be laid on the altar of friendship, and at last he believes he has found a subject to suit both himself and the French. It is "Wayland the Smith,"† the first germ of which we find sown between two seedlings of *Achilleus* in the posthumous notes, whilst a fairly full synopsis of the story forms an epilogue to *The Art-work of the Future.* His choice is made, or rather, the inspiration has come; so he informs Liszt on December 5 that he is now prepared to go to Paris and arrange with Gustave Vaez about a French text for this opera. At the end of the month he gives Uhlig minuter particulars: "Formerly it was: Deny thyself, become another! become Parisian, to win Paris for thee. But now my plan is: Remain entirely what thou art, shew the Parisians what is really in thee . . . for thy aim is simply *to be understood for what thou art.*—So on January 16, 1850, I go to Paris. A couple of my overtures are already in rehearsal there,‡ and I shall take with me my operatic plan all cut and dried: it is—*Wiland der Schmied.* In the first place I assail the five-

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* See, among others, a letter to Uhlig of Sept. 16, 1849, and another to F. Heine of Sept. 14, 1850, both referring to the same period.

† For an admirable account of this *Wieland der Schmiedt*, in all its bearings, see Dr Rudolf Schlösser's exhaustive essay in the *Bayreuther Blätter* 1895, pp. 30-64.

‡ Meaning those to *Rienzi* and *Tannhäuser*, but mistaken as to the fact of rehearsal.

act form, then the statute by which every grand opera *must* have a ballet. If I can inspire Gustave Vaez with an understanding of my object and the will to carry it through with me, well and good: if not, I shall seek till I find the right librettist. Every difficulty in the way of the undertaking shall supply myself and my associate with matter for attacks in the press, even should it come to a merciless forking up of the whole dung-heap, to let fresh water in. And there I shall be in my element; for my business is to make revolution wherever I go." The subject itself was in the nature of an allegory on Art and Revolution, and with that and a projected translation of his recent writings he considered he would have "soundly paved the way, so far as Art goes, for that Social Republic which, sooner or later, is inevitable in France." If he really must go to detestable Paris—as not merely Liszt, but Minna, old Fischer and particularly F. Heine, insisted—he would put the best face on it, and go in fighting trim.

One of the chief obstacles to actual execution of the Paris scheme had been of the most prosaic character—deficiency of funds; for even genius cannot get itself conveyed and clad and lodged and fed for nothing, at least in this sordid "present." As may have been guessed from the tone of the extract last-cited, however, that obstacle had now been fairly surmounted. For all the Dresden calumnies, such as the infamous invention that Wagner had set fire to the Old Opera-house and another building,* he still had friends there who believed in him, some of them scarce known to him in the flesh. In fact, his exile seems to have drawn these friends not only closer to himself in spirit, but also to each other: Uhlig, Fischer and F. Heine, henceforth form an inseparable trio, though the first-named was young enough to have been the son of either of the other two, and in ordinary times they would certainly have considered him far too 'advanced.' We hear much more of these particular three than of anybody else in Dresden, but there was a warm corner for Wagner the man, as well as artist, in many another heart there; greetings are constantly exchanged by him with quite a number of his former subordinates, proving on what affectionate terms he had stood with his band. Yet these could

* See letter to Liszt of July 9, 1849; also Appendix to volume ii.

not help him directly; they were all too poor. Indirectly they did. Last September he had written to Uhlig, half in joke, "Apropos! if you know any people who, in return for all my future writings, poetry and music, would give me just so much a-year as would keep me alive—for without life I can neither write, make poetry nor music—you might just give them my address." It was a case of a serious word spoken in jest, and Uhlig took it in right earnest; for on December the 5th Wagner writes to Liszt, "Have you been kind enough to attribute my backwardness in executing your—now our—Parisian plan to my extraordinary plight? Dear Liszt, it is a question of providing me with the bare essentials for a definite end. Of course it has long been clear to me that you alone cannot support me; and, knowing your position, it is only with a heavy heart that I can crave of you a sacrifice. I therefore addressed myself to a friend in Dresden (quite poor himself), begging him to try and collect among my other friends some money to help you tide me over the first and hardest times: so far, his account leads me to expect no great success from his efforts; in any case, it will be but trifling." But Uhlig had been better than his word, for on the 27th of the month Wagner writes him (in that letter announcing his Paris decision), "The news from X has touched me to the quick, in more respects than one! With the heart of Woman my art has ever fared quite well. Women are the music of life: they take up everything with opener mind than men, and beautify it with their fellow-feeling. —While looking forward to still further news, I have the surprise of a remittance of money from Dresden through Herr P. [about £75]. At once I wrote back, and described as well as I could the feelings woken in me by these tokens of affectionate interest from people I hardly knew at all. If such experiences are bound to make any man good and cheerful, to me they are absolute blessings at the present moment: never have I so keenly felt the boon of freedom, so realised the truth that nothing but a loving bond with others can make one free. If through the help of X I should eventually be placed in the position of seeing a few years guaranteed to me without the need of wage-earning, those years would be the most decisive of my life, and particularly of my career as artist. . . . Give Frau R. and Herr P. my very best greetings! To K. I have much to write ere long."

The cypher "P." pretty certainly stands for Dr Pusinelli, whom we have met in Dresden, and whose assistance in the publishing trouble has been mentioned in the appendix to vol. ii. As to the "X" there can be no doubt: it is the same as "Frau R.," mother of Wagner's young friend "K." (Karl Ritter, the youth we last saw with his friend Hans von Bülow evening-dressed for a reading of *Siegfried's Tod*). One of Wagner's mainstays during the next few years, to this noble woman we must devote a paragraph at the risk of retarding our narrative.

Frau Julie Ritter, a widow in comfortable circumstances, though by no means rich, in the early forties had left her home at Narva, in the Russian Baltic provinces, to settle down at Dresden for the education of her two sons, Karl and Alexander. Living in great seclusion, she was scarcely known to Wagner by sight, though she and her family were ardent devotees of his music. In fact, the only time that he and his benefactress really spoke to each other face to face, was on a brief rendezvous in Switzerland, to be recorded at the end of this chapter. Doubly notable, then, is her unselfish act in coming forward with sorely-needed aid at an important crisis in his life. The earnestness of her esteem, the firmness of her faith in his future, she proved in a manner most rare among even his loudest-professing "admirers": joyfully she gave of her none too overflowing means, to smooth his flinty path. Without one side-glance at publicity, she gave so quietly, so simply and so naturally, that giver and receiver alike could rejoice in a relation at once so practical and so ideal. Wagner had written to Liszt last August, "Ah! children, could ye but give me the wage of an average mechanic, ye truly should have joy in my creations!"—and again (Oct. '49), "Penniless, with neither goods nor heritage, for bare life's sake I should be doomed to earning. But nothing have I learnt except my art, and that I cannot possibly convert into a livelihood in times like ours. . . . The only public for which I can create, is a tiny flock of units; to those units I must therefore turn, and put to them the question if they love me and my best artistic gifts enough to make it possible for me to be *myself* and unfold my powers in peace. These units are not many, and moreover they are wide-dispersed; but the character of their interest in me—and there's the rub—is energetic. Dear friend, for me 'tis a question of bare life!" This sympathetic mother of a family had

divined that need, and seen at once a duty even greater than that she owed to her own children; so far as lay within her power, she would be the supporter of a genius whose creations must enrich the world—a higher education not only for her sons and daughters, but for those of every other mother. At present she was unable to do as much for Wagner's sustentation as she would have chosen, but after a year or two, her worldly fortune having meanwhile increased, she unpretentiously paid out to him a regular annuity that only ceased at *his* desire. With Liszt and the Wesendoncks (who do not enter Wagner's life just yet), to her is due a debt of gratitude the world can never liquidate: the foresight and affection of these high-souled benefactors preserved to life a struggling genius in the fulness of his powers.

Wagner's first thought on receiving that unexpected windfall, is to set aside the greater portion for maintenance of his wife during his temporary absence, merely reserving for himself just sufficient to defray the expenses of his journey and first week or so in Paris, where he anticipates a fee from Wigand for *The Art-work*. At the outside it will not go very far, and before starting he is anxious to hear from Uhlig whether this is the full extent of the benefit announced, about which there seems to have been a little uncertainty. His departure therefore is slightly postponed; perhaps also on account of his having to conduct at Zurich a Beethoven Symphony (the Seventh), of the rehearsals of which he apprises Uhlig on January the 12th. Meantime Liszt sends him a draft on Rothschild for 500 francs (£20), so that he can start with less anxiety, though scarcely with the feeling that his pockets are well-lined. The operatic sketch has still to be put upon paper, for subsequent translation into French. Completed is that at last, in its first (unpublished) German form, though "It was with endless labour that I forced myself to my Wieland; it always sounded like *Comment vous portez-vous?*—The ink would not flow; the pen sputtered; outside was vile grey weather." Truth to tell, he was thoroughly broken down for the present, what with rheumatism and his recent spell of literary work at high pressure. On the 28th he is "starting to-morrow morning, fairly knocked up, and suffering from extreme nervous prostration," but hoping against hope that the change of scene will do him good.

On the first of February, 1850, he arrives in Paris—driven there against his better judgment. It was madness to undertake

the journey in such a state of health, to say nothing further, and the consequences were not long in proclaiming themselves: "feeble, full of pain, unable to sleep." Feb. 8 he writes to Uhlig that he has been unable to do anything, so far, beyond moving from one lodging to another, in search of quiet; he is now installed at 59, Rue de Provence. Things had started ominously badly. Through some unexplained miscalculation, Belloni, "who was to have been the main trunk of this Parisian business," had departed for *Weimar* at the very time of Wagner's pre-arranged descent on Paris; and away Liszt's agent remained for a month and a half—the full extent of time originally marked out for the invasion. Then, Belloni had begged him last autumn for the scores of the *Rienzi* and *Tannhäuser* overtures, to get them performed this winter by the Union Musicale, a society recently founded as a rival to the Conservatoire concerts. Wagner, on the other hand, had believed that at least the *Tannhäuser* overture was meant for the Conservatoire itself; which may have been a determining factor in his expedition. After a week to ten days spent in Paris to no purpose —in the absence of his right-hand man—he hears from the manager of the Union Musicale, Seghers by name, that they are very willing to perform the overtures, but the cost of copying out the parts would be more than the Union's scanty funds can bear. A terrible disappointment, for the composer had been under the impression that his overtures were already 'in practice,' and that all he would have to do would be to put the finishing touches to rehearsals well advanced. There is nothing for it, but to beg Liszt* to send from Weimar the "engraved orchestral parts" of the *Tannhäuser* overture. After endless delays they arrive, but all too soon: "The Union Musicale has everything, save time as yet to study my overture." A fine beginning to this hateful Paris triumph; not one whit more hopeful than the total rout of ten years back!

* In a letter of February 9, "2 pages quarto," not contained in the *Correspondence;* publicly offered for sale, however, by a Berlin autograph-dealer, at the price of 86 marks. It would be interesting to know how it came to be abstracted from the collection; but in the case of *Wagner* manuscripts, it would appear, the sternest custodians of morals have no reprobation for either receiver or purchaser of alienated goods. This is not the only letter of Wagner's to Liszt that has fluttered away from its fellows.

And ill all the time, the sleepless watches of the night disturbed by visions of a dwindling purse; the fee for his *Art-work of the Future* finally arriving, from Wigand, reduced to one half of his anticipations,—a miserable 200 francs, upon which to keep up appearances in a most expensive capital! But his *Wieland*, the new scenario he had drafted expressly for Paris: what about that? The very sketch "seemed laughable to everyone who gave a thought to the French language and Opera," as he tells F. Heine a few months later, thereby undoubtedly meaning Gustave Vaez and his librettist acquaintances. Their laughter proved Wagner's salvation, as we shall presently see, since it was on his operatic draft that had hinged the whole Parisian project. And they were wise in their generation. A work like *Wieland* was scarcely the fare to set before a public never-sated with the tawdry splendours of *le Prophète*, as Wagner had an opportunity of judging for himself.

This patchwork opera of Meyerbeer's, the "Prophet No. 5," had first seen the light on April 16, 1849, and already was approaching its jubilee. It was the 47th performance that Wagner attended: "In the last act my attention was unfortunately distracted by a banker, who talked uncommonly loud in his box. Otherwise I have convinced myself that this work has attained a quite undeniably great and lasting success with the public of the Paris Grand Opéra: the house is always filled to repletion, and the applause more enthusiastic than anything I've ever witnessed here." Written February 24, these words refer to an experience of a night or so previously; but the impression is not so swift to fade, with its object-lesson in the art of catering for the Parisians of the middle of the nineteenth century. On March 13 our hero returns to the subject quite in his old *Abendzeitung* vein: "My first sight of the *Prophète*—the prophet of the new world.—Happy and uplifted, I bade goodbye to all subversive plans, which seemed to me so godless now I saw the pure, high, hallowed True and godlike Human already leading so immediate and warm a life in the blessed Present. Don't blame me for this change of mind! Who cares for nothing but the cause, cleaves to no prejudice, but gladly casts false principles adrift, once he has seen that they were simply promptings of his personal vanity. If genius comes, and whisks us into other paths, an enthusiast can but follow willingly, even though he feel

himself incapable of doing aught upon them. I observe—I'm falling into ecstasies, again, at thought of that night of revelation: forgive me!" This "banker-music," on which "all decent folk in Paris itself had turned their backs"—with this kind of thing had his nearest friends desired him to compete.

With Meyerbeer himself, quite positively, there was no encounter this time. For that matter, Wagner mixed as little, if so much, with notables as ten years since: "Here, in Paris, people have a monstrous deal to do; but only with themselves and lucre. Of artists I know not one: even Berlioz, whom I willingly would forgive his bizarreries, cannot attract me in his capacity of Meyerbeer's bondsman." Gottfried Semper he meets again, and promptly writes to beg friend Sulzer to procure the great architect, now outlawed like himself, some decent post at the Zurich University.* Of his old German friends of bygone days there were but two now left in Paris, faithful as ever in their personal attachment, but become a trifle dulled and groovy: Minna is informed by letter that "Anders and Kietz, with whom I often take my meals, send hearty greetings. Anders in particular has taken you very much to heart; he is never tired of clinking his glass to you, and tells me of a poem he has written in your honour: 'O, herzgeliebte Minna!—Du, die stets meinem Sinn nah!' I countersign it, and wish you every happiness." † As for Ernst Kietz, he draws an elegant pastel portrait of Richard, ‡ referred to in the sitter's letters more than once as "most successful," but really somewhat too conventionalised to give a fair idea of what he *must* have looked like in those days. The face is clean-shaven, but outlined by a tiny fringe of hair that meets below the chin; of rugged power there is not a trace, and though the brow is sufficiently high and broad, the temples

* The full text of this letter, dated Feb. 22, is given in the Appendix. It furnishes additional evidence of Wagner's unselfish care for others in the midst of his own sore trials. Incidentally it refers to a rumour (unfounded) that his exile may soon be ended, but declares that in no case would he return to his former slavery at Dresden; already he is longing to be back in Zurich: "I am very melancholy, ill, and heartily sick of Paris, which goes against my whole nature."

† The letter, unpublished, also treats of a contemplated change of abode at Zurich: Minna's proposals are accepted in detail, "I agree to everything, if only it will set tormented you at ease."

‡ Reproduced in Kürschner's *Wagner-Jahrbuch* 1886, from a contemporary daguerreotype.

have no characteristic dip and swell indicative of the demiurgic genius: altogether the appearance of some eminent, but placid young physician. Indeed this excellent and devoted comrade had small idea of the force and fixity of purpose that lay behind the genial manner of his friend; after his death (forty years later) a copy of *The Art-work* with an autograph dedication, besides other brochures sent from Zurich, were found among E. Kietz' belongings, *uncut, unread!* No wonder Wagner complained so often of feeling so "alone." Yet there are other sides to human intercourse, than the rigorously intellectual, and it was some comfort at least to have warm honest hearts around him in this cold forbidding Paris.

One of his schemes, before arrival, had been to do a little fighting in the Press; but that was soon knocked on the head. Even a translation of *The Art-work* into French, he feels, would not be safe till he had placed the Alps between; for the following reason. February 8, having recently heard that sentence of death has now been actually passed on Heubner, Roeckel and Bakunin, he tells Uhlig of his intention to send them "an energetic brotherly greeting through the Commander of the Königstein," the Saxon fortress where the three are at present imprisoned; but his own personal freedom is none too well assured in Paris. One morning in February an agent of the French Ministry of the Interior enters his room: "For a whole hour the man took a protocol of the objects of my stay in Paris. After I had convinced him that I had no thought of making anything but the most guileless of music—according to use and tradition, with *pas de deux* and all that sort of thing—he gave me his blessing, admonished me to stick to art with proper zeal, and—having fallen into quite a paternal strain—moreover dropped a few assorted patriarchal hints not unconnected with a packing of my portmanteau. I have since discovered that this well-meaning soul is an enthusiastic worshipper of Meyerbeer." On March 13, about to pack of his own accord, Wagner can pass the affair off with a joke; but it was serious enough at the time, for he had told his Dresden friend on February 24, "My plan of exerting myself, not for the present, but for future Paris, I have had to abandon forthwith. Apart from the misfortune that I have merely German, not French instincts—my articles would have been accepted by none but Socialistic papers:

after the appearance of the first, according to what I am now informed, I should certainly have been allowed but 24 hours, at the utmost, for the remainder of my stay in Paris." So he had to content himself with an article for Germany, devoting this fallow end of February to a brief essay on *Art and Climate* in reply to certain criticisms on his previous pamphlets advanced by "a good friend in the *Allgemeine Zeitung*." The article appeared in the April issue of the Stuttgart *Deutsche Monatsschrift* (ed. A. Kolatschek), and exhibits the author once again in his very best form, with all his old dash and go.

What had restored him to good spirits? In a word, the definite abandonment of his Paris opera plan. From the beginning his whole nature had rebelled: "Its first veto was proclaimed in my illness, which for by far the greatest part was a malady of spirits; fresh and active as I am with every undertaking that engrosses my whole soul—dull and dreary was I when it came to thoughts of Paris."* But, "like a horse in the desert that cures itself by biting open a vein, I have bitten the vein of Paris Opera. How I rejoice to feel this stale unhealthy blood drain from me." He had cured himself, by a resolution that may truly be classed as heroic; for it was at the risk of mortally offending his principal ally. February 24 he informs Uhlig, "I'm happy to tell you, I've got to the root of my illness; a violence done to my spirit had aggravated my bodily ailments to a dangerous pitch. However, a few days back I wrote F. Liszt a circumstantial letter, the contents of which will be communicated to you, setting forth the reasons of my categorical resolve for *no* consideration to write an opera for Paris, but at most to give a finished work, my *Lohengrin*—become indifferent to me—to be plucked to pieces and woven in the laurel-wreath of the Grand Parisian Opera-hell. As, however, I'm not so childish as to imagine that gift would be found acceptable, and moreover it's impossible for me to contribute even a stroke of the pen to such a trafficking offer, I presume my dear friends Heine and Fischer will also be robbed of the pleasure of seeing a Wagnerian Swan-knight swim across the Rhine.—The advantage to myself has been, that I grew better the moment I had posted that letter; an improvement increasing when I received its answer yesterday,

* Letter to Uhlig of March 13, 1850, reviewing recent experiences; combined with that of February 24, it furnishes a fairly full account of this Paris episode.

bringing me hearty congratulations on my decision." *—Bravo Liszt! If it was an effort to Wagner, to make a clean breast of his utter repugnance, to Liszt it must have been as great an effort to swallow a wholesale rejection of his pet idea after it had been tried for barely three weeks.

A singular reflection will occur to the reader after weighing the above, even if it has not suggested itself long since: Why on earth had it been considered necessary to compose an opera expressly for Paris at all, when there were four completed operas in Wagner's budget?—As for *Rienzi*, we know that Liszt had advised its tender months ago, as the most appropriate for the Paris Opéra; but it would have been necessary to mangle it to such an extent, that Wagner declined the dispiriting and dubious task. The *Flying Dutchman* was practically unknown to Liszt, but the fact of Dietsch's failure with a *Vaisseau fantôme* may reasonably be supposed to have militated against that. To *Tannhäuser* there can have been but one objection, namely that the work had already been produced elsewhere. But if absolute novelty was demanded by the prestige of Grand Opéra, it really seems superfluous to have beaten the bush for another subject, when *Lohengrin* was staring both author and adviser in the face. Viewed in the light of the present day, no work, that Wagner could possibly have written, would be better suited to Parisian requirements: here were dramatic pathos, melody, and spectacle, with a story cosmopolitan in its appeal. If Wagner's mission, according to Liszt's own words last January, was "to Germanise the French, or better, to inspire and empassion them for a more universal, more comprehensive, nobler dramatic art-work," the instrument lay ready to his hand. Why was it not employed? One explanation alone can be assigned: Liszt had serious doubts of the success of its performance anywhere, and had thrown so much cold water on the score from that particular standpoint, that its very author had temporarily lost all interest in it. Rejected at Dresden, after acceptance by Lüttichau; viewed askance by his most effusive friend, whatever his tribute to its "ideal" beauty—for the first time since his youth a work of Wagner's is forsaken by its procreator as stillborn.

And *Wieland?* It would be instructive to see the sketch that

* Unfortunately, neither that letter to Liszt, nor Liszt's answer, is included in the *Correspondence*.

had roused the ridicule of Paris connoisseurs, thus extricating the author from the whole dilemma; but we cannot imagine that it differed in any essential from the more elaborate model bequeathed us in the Prose Works (Vol. I.), that splendid effigy of genius lamed, yet forging itself wings and raining destruction on its oppressors. Let the French deride it, as King Neiding and his court had mocked its hero, this *Wieland der Schmiedt* should be carved in German as a memorial-tablet of what they had declined. Relieved of torturing constraint, Wagner sets to work and turns the embryo into a full prose-draft: "I now have only to versify it [March 13]. Otherwise the whole poem is ready —German! German!—how it flew along!—This Wieland still shall bear you all upon his wings; even your friendly hopes of Paris!" For the nonce his *Siegfried's Tod* itself seems thrust into the background by this new creation, for on February 24 he had written Uhlig, "From the Alps I will write you all a *German* Wiland fully-fledged—*that* the Folk will some day understand. As for *Siegfried* and *Achilleus*, the representatives of whom are probably unborn, I will make them over printed—black on white —to a happier generation."—Just to supplement the incidental reference to *Achilleus*, we may add that next summer Wagner writes to the same correspondent, "The poem of *Achilleus* has been haunting me again;—I wanted to get it ready for printing. But you tell me, Wigand will not even print the *Siegfried*. Thank God, he's more sensible than me. Liszt bespeaks my *Siegfried* for production at Weimar. . . . So goodbye writer, for the present!"—the last we hear of a scheme which certainly had moved a little way toward realisation (see *P.* VIII. 365 and 367-8), though not nearly so far as *Wieland*. It was no poverty of invention, then, that had paralysed him in presence of Grand Opéra, but the total incompatibility of mid-century Paris with his vibrant art.

Why does he still remain there, after so emphatic a repudiation? For a very trifling reason; one of those minor engagements which assume the rank of binding ties when the main knot has been severed. "Not to have come on a fool's errand," he is waiting for the only thing that could avail him a little in Paris now, a performance of his *Tannhäuser* overture, after which he means to take a journey southwards for complete recovery of his health. But he waits in vain, till at last he makes up his

mind to take his trip first and return by the end of the month "for possible rehearsals." The prospects of a good rendering are by no means roseate, for those rehearsals, if they ever come off, are to be under a conductor who consistently "carries out the bright idea of interpreting tempo, expression, nuances etc. altogether differently from what the composer intended, and therefore passionately insists on rehearsing and conducting everything himself, conscientiously forbidding the composer to expose his hazy views of his own work." Uhlig asks him if it would not be possible to break through Parisian traditions for once; but meanwhile the question has tranquilly answered itself: during his excursion Wagner writes him, "My overture I cannot possibly conduct myself in Paris, for the simple reason that—*it won't be performed there at all*, as they no longer had time for rehearsals:—perhaps 'next year'! This answer I received on the evening before my departure from Paris: I never laughed so heartily in all my life." The whole business had degenerated into broad farce, and the most sensible course was to join in the cachinnation.

On March 14, at 8 in the morning, he leaves Paris on his excursion. Though his departure is rather "sudden," and obviously connected with a letter he had received in the midst of writing Uhlig on the 13th, the plan had been maturing for two or three weeks, leaving nothing but the exact date to be settled. It was more than a mere pleasure jaunt, or quest of recuperation: the sympathy of that noble woman who had already sent assistance last December had been at work beyond the walls of Dresden. At Bordeaux there lived a well-to-do connection of Frau Ritter's, a lady who had also conceived a lively admiration for Wagnerian opera during a prolonged visit to the Saxon capital; a recent correspondence between this lady and Frau Ritter had issued in the final invitation to Bordeaux. There steps were to be taken for arrangement of a joint provision for the artist, a guarantee of maintenance for the next few years—i.e. until the world should have sufficiently awoken to his genius to pay him a fraction of his rightful wage. With a heart made lighter, not so much by the proposed benefaction, as by the sentiment that had inspired it, he turns his face towards the south, rejoicing in the thought that his Paris difficulties had actually conspired to free him of a hateful task. A few days after arriving at Bordeaux he writes to Frau Ritter (March 22)

to express to her, "not his gratitude, but his *happiness*" at a sympathy that goes beyond the artist to include the man. The same mood pervades his letter to Uhlig of four days later; and it is just this feeling of intense elation at being prized for his own true nature, that makes him somewhat hard on worthy Uhlig's "philistine delight" at his prospective annuity: "I'm *happy*," and that suffices; "Much is under way. If you all are sensible, and you in particular will no longer play the court-musician, we all may be happy before the world can catch us up."

But his happiness is very soon dashed, even that part of it which had appealed the most to Uhlig's common-sense; in *this* way the motherly forethought of Frau Ritter did not attain its end. Something happened, to place an unexpected obstacle between her plan and its execution: what that something was, is not for us too curiously to inquire; but it frustrated the object of this expedition to the south of France. All we can say, is that the shadow of Minna looms over Wagner's next forlorn decision. Returned to Paris, at last to meet Belloni, who brings him the most affectionate messages from Liszt, he writes to the latter: "A crisis has occurred in my life. The last shackles have fallen that bound me to a world in which I must soon have gone to ground—not only mentally, but physically as well. Under eternal pressure—put upon me by my nearest surroundings—I've lost my health, my nerves are shattered. For the present I can live for little more than convalescence: my sustenance has been cared for; you shall hear from me from time to time." Dark words, pointing to nothing but escape from domestic torment, a spell of nomadism—an interpretation borne out, among other things, by that passage in the *Communication* (written 1851), "My sufferings became so insupportable that the very instinct of life drove me to save myself by breaking with everyone who still was friendly-minded toward me, and fleeing into God-knows-what strange land. —In this extremity, however, I was understood by truest friends: at the hand of infinitely tender love they led me back. Thanks to them who alone know whom I mean" (*P.* I. 384).

If the veil of this mystery can never be completely lifted, in the absence of letters so private that they are never likely to be given to the world, the names of Wagner's rescuers at least have no need to be concealed: on the one hand, Liszt—in the manner to be related in our next chapter—on the other, Frau Ritter.

From Bordeaux he had appointed to meet this lady and her family in May at Villeneuve on the Lake of Geneva. Whether he went there direct from Paris, to await their arrival, we are not informed—nor, in fact, of anything that happened in the four weeks following that cry of blank despair; but on May 22 he passes his seven-and-thirtieth birthday in the company of Frau Ritter, her elder son Karl, and her two daughters Julie and Emilie.* This week at Villeneuve was the sole personal encounter between the new-found benefactress and the artist for whose character and genius she had conceived so high an esteem, though we shall find him repeatedly begging her to migrate with all her family to Switzerland for good. Its gracious memory is preserved in the wistful accents of a letter sent from Zermatt to Frau Ritter on June the 9th: "I am alone again, and happiness has taken wing like a dream. How do I live, and where? Eh! *do* I live at all?"—imploring her not to delay their next visit for the dreary length of a year. Her son Karl she left in Wagner's tutelage—the greatest proof of her respect—a youth of bright promise and richly endowed with poetic and musical talent, as to whom Wagner had lately been anxiously inquiring of Uhlig, "Has he a voice?" An agreeable and enlivening companion for the lonely man: "Karl much delights me," as he expresses himself a month or two later—"His ability is extraordinary; he seizes a point with fabulous swiftness. Moreover, on our solitary walks he treats me with the most engaging confidence: then he will talk one's head off, but always with spirit and charm" (Letter 14 to Uhlig, July 1850).

After Zermatt, Thun is visited (with Berne on the way?), and Wagner returns early in July (certainly before the 10th) to take up his abode once more in Zurich, under altered circumstances. The Paris nightmare he had scared away; other troubles have gradually lulled down; for a time he can look forward to pursuing his path in peace.

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* Frln Julie soon afterwards married Chamber-musician Kummer of Dresden (*vide* vol. ii. p. 129). Emilie is the damsel who had lately enclosed a letter of Uhlig's in one from herself, and by her quick apprehension had won from Wagner a noted tribute to her sex (Letter 11 to Uhlig, March 26, 1850). Of Karl we are about to hear a good deal more. The other son, Alexander (not present on this occasion), subsequently married Wagner's niece Francisca, sister of Johanna Wagner.

II.

PRODUCTION OF LOHENGRIN.

Liszt's unique friendship.—Lohengrin *to be given at Weimar.*—*"A new" Minna, and a new Zurich home.—Preliminaries of the Weimar production.—Representation and its effects.—The burning question of cuts.—Articles on* Lohengrin *by Liszt and his lieutenants.—Karl Ritter and the Zurich theatre; invitation to young Hans von Bülow; parental objections set at nought; success and withdrawal.—Paris falls foul of the* Tannhäuser *overture; Brussels nibbles at* Lohengrin.—*Waiting for a thaw.*

> *Produce my Lohengrin! To none but you could I entrust this opera's creation: to you I delegate it in the fullest, gladdest peace. Produce it where you will: no matter if only at Weimar!*
>
> R. WAGNER (to Liszt, 1850).

NOTWITHSTANDING the clouds that overshadowed it from time to time, the veiling mists too often woven by the hand of an enchantress, Liszt's friendship for Wagner is so superb of scale, so single-eyed of character, that nothing could be more insensate than to blame him for not having fully compassed from the first a phenomenon so incommensurable that even now, with the perspective of half a century, our eyes are but beginning to take in its overarching grandeur. Rather should we recognise it as a token of this friendship's lofty origin, that upon the intellectual side we see it growing inch by inch, whereas its spiritual stature was full-grown from its birth, an Athene sprung from the *heart* of Zeus. When Liszt in 1848 drew near to Wagner, he knew no other of his works, in living form, except *Rienzi:* of *Tannhäuser* he had seen nothing but the silent score; through his own rehearsing of this work, did he first approach the deeper secrets of its author. A year later, when he gave sanctuary to the

refugee, he knew no more of *Lohengrin* than did the world at large, i.e. at most its name; but the mode in which he gradually initiates himself into the magic of that work by unaided study of its score (to be followed step by step in his letters to Wagner) is proof most eloquent of Liszt's sweet reasonableness, to say nothing of his musical intuition. It was Spohr over again, though with far more energy and fire, far more permanent results, and, be it said, a far more difficult problem. Nevertheless we have just seen Liszt spurring his friend to attempt the impossible, to engage in an enterprise the most repugnant to his inner nature, and thus driving him to the brink of despair. To Wagner himself it was a paradox, as he tells Uhlig in Letter 14 (July 1850*): "Strange! that a friend who on many an important point of life and thought stands fairly remote from me, should prove by unflinching loyalty and active care for me so uncommon an interest in my whole being. I allude to Liszt.—He does not comprehend me in my thought; my line of action he thoroughly dislikes: yet he respects me in all I think and do, most studiously refrains from any word that might offend me, and appears to devote his whole soul to but one object, my welfare and the circulation of my works." Wholly unsuspicious as it is of the feminine key to the enigma, no nobler tribute could be rendered by the one man to the other's character. It is continued by an account of the reparation Liszt is making him for his wild-goose chase to Paris; though that, of course, is not the way in which Wagner puts it. To the origin of that recompense we will now go back :—

"At the end of my last stay in Paris, ill, wretched, and brooding in despair, my eye fell on the score of my almost forgotten *Lohengrin*. Of a sudden it distressed me to think that these notes should never ring from off the death-wan paper: I wrote two words to Liszt" (*P.* I. 388). Those "two words" were the

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* In his *Richard Wagner* Mr H. S. Chamberlain assigns a passage from this undated letter to July 27, 1850, doubtless upon good authority. In the printed collection it is wrongly placed, being there made to follow a letter "to a mutual friend" dated August 24. Upon comparison with the *Wagner-Liszt Correspondence*, however, it will be seen that this Letter 14 was written on or about the same day as Letter 35 in that Correspondence; whereas internal evidence proves that the latter, unfortunately also undated, belongs for certain to the second half of *July*.

letter of April 21, 1850, a passsage from which we have already quoted toward the end of our last chapter. We shall now see how entirely against his sober judgment was Wagner's late "indifference" to this opera*: "I have just been glancing through the score of my Lohengrin—as a rule I don't read my own works. An immense longing has flamed up in me, to have this work produced. Herewith I lay my pleading at your heart. Produce my Lohengrin! You are the only one to whom I could dream of addressing that prayer: to none but you could I entrust the creation of this opera: but to you I commit it in the fullest, gladdest peace. Produce it where you will: no matter if only in Weimar: I'm certain you will manage to procure all possible and necessary means, and people will deny you nothing. Produce Lohengrin, and let its entry into life be *your* work! In Dresden exists a correct score of the opera: Herr v. Lüttichau bought it of me for the cost of the copying (36 thalers): as he won't allow it to be performed there—against which I should also enter a protest—it's possible he may make you over the exemplar itself for the 36 thalers, but in any case he surely would let you have a copy taken. By the enclosed I authorise you to receive the same."

Again has Wagner helped himself, and his friend is quick to follow suit. Owing to that Swiss tour, and whatever may have preceded it, correspondence on the subject was by no means easy for a while; but from a letter of young Bülow's to his mother (Berlin, May 24, 1850) we gather that Liszt has complied with the petition before a month is out, if not considerably earlier, and von Zigesar, the Weimar Intendant, has already opened negotiations with Wagner—or rather, has endeavoured so to do; for the composer, with his very movable address, seems to have heard nothing definite until his arrival at Thun. At Thun he learns for certain that his work is accepted for immediate performance, and hastens to despatch a manuscript libretto revised for the printer, together with full instructions for scenery and mounting (July 2). The stress he lays on the Grail-knight's exterior is characteristic: "Let his representative be as dazzling

* See Appendix for a letter of a year later, addressed to Adolf Stahr, in which the wind has somewhat veered away from *Lohengrin* again, under the immediate influence of a fresh creation.

to look upon as art can make him; one's eyes should be blinded at very sight of him." Interesting also is the touch of humour recalling to us those irksome drawing-lessons of his boyhood: "My drawings of the scenery etc. will much delight you. I reckon them among my most successful creations; where technique has left me somewhat in the lurch, you must make the best of my intention, which you'll be able to guess from the literary key. The foliage presented difficulties—insuperable as yet—and if perspective makes all painters sweat like me, the art of painting can by no means be called light work." Most important is the attention he demands of the stage-manager to the written indications in the score, so that music and action may march hand in hand. A special word to Liszt himself: "If you make up your mind that a thing *must* be, I know that it also *will*—or, that you'll abandon it outright. On this point —I believe—we're at one!"

We thus are approaching a turning-point in our hero's artistic career, a kind of second start; but we must first see how matters are faring with him at home.

When Wagner first arrived in Zurich, a homeless refugee, he was *alone;* unceasing was his anxiety expressed to Liszt concerning his "poor wife," and endless were his entreaties to her to join him. Whatever the cause of her holding back, Minna came at last, but only to renew that everlasting friction which had soured their last few years in Dresden. Outspoken as Wagner is in his private letters about everything else, his doings or his feelings, on this point he displays a reticence beyond all praise; yet a word at random, here and there, too painfully suggests his suffering from domestic conflict, especially as concerns that odious Paris project. Liszt could reconcile himself at once to its reversal in mid air: not so Minna; and the apparent impossibility of getting his true motives ever credited, let alone understood, in his household—where Minna had an ally in the shape of her sister, Natalie Planer—constitutes an essential factor in Richard's recent desperate resolve to break away from everything. From Thun he writes to Liszt, July the second, "I have much to tell you, when next we meet; for the present, merely thus much from my immediate past: my proposed journey to Greece has fallen through. There were too many objections, not all of which could be overcome: by prefer-

ence I would have quit the world entirely." * So forlorn had been the writer's state, as to make it a matter of indifference whether he were even arrested and "lodged in a Royal Saxon penitentiary." The same letter of July 2, however, concludes with "I am about to put an extinguisher on the idiotic rumours spread about me, by *going back to Zurich*."

And back he went within a week. The very measures he had seriously been contemplating, in order to strike off "the last shackles that bound him to the world," had brought Minna at last to her senses; moved by a salutary shock that "searched her soul," she "became convinced she could not live without him." This is the meaning of her husband's words in Letter 14 to Uhlig: "I presume you have been informed by Frau Ritter of the turn in my affairs.† Let me therefore be silent about the immediate past, only telling you thus much: I have got a new wife. Though she remains the same old one in everything, yet now I know that —let what may betide me—she'll stand by me till death. For my part, I honestly had no idea of merely testing her; but, as events have turned out, she has passed through an ordeal of fire, such as all must endure who would stand to-day with open eyes by side of those who recognise and steer towards the future. My friends here have behaved splendidly." He significantly adds, however, "I've aged very much; now I know for certain that I am in the second half of my life, and have left behind all hope of much," proving how deeply he himself had been harrowed by the experiences of the past six months.—Those friends—"Wagner's admiring friends extended their welcome to his wife," as Frau

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* Evidently there had been a previous letter to Liszt foreshadowing such an expedition, apart from the vague reference in that of April 21, "You shall hear from me from time to time." Dr Dinger, in fact, quotes from the *Verein. Volksblätter* of May 18, 1850, the report that "Kapellmeister Wagner, who has hitherto been residing in Paris, is about to take a journey to the East on the advice of his physicians"—a rumour for which there certainly was more foundation than for the other gossip which Dinger connects with it.

† In June he had written Uhlig (Letter 12), "You will receive from Frau Ritter 100 thalers for my wife!" Either Minna must have gone for a time to her parents in Dresden, whom Wagner had long been supporting; or things were still at such a pass in June, that direct communication between husband and wife was out of the question. There is an obvious omission of a letter between Nos. 11 and 12 to Uhlig, answering to the aforesaid gap in the *Wagner-Liszt Correspondence*.

Wille puts it in her reminiscences; those simple Zurich friends, upon whom Minna had glanced so disdainfully when her eye was still fixed on the fleshpots of Dresden and Paris; those friends had "behaved splendidly" to her in her grass-widowhood, and won her to a juster estimate of native worth. So we presently find Richard writing to old Fischer that his wife "is quite at home, and thoroughly Switzerised" (Nov. '50).

The new home, selected by Minna while her husband was in Paris, lay in the Sterngasse, commune of Enge. The house belonged to a Frau Hirzel, and bore the name "Zum Abendstern," which possibly had attracted Minna to it through memories of *Tannhäuser* and brighter days; but Richard's Zurich friends, at the request of his wife, perversely dubbed it "Villa Rienzi." In July he writes to Uhlig, "Had I my choice, nowhere in the wide world would I live, than here. We have a most agreeable dwelling by the lake, with perfectly glorious scenery, garden, and so on. I go down in my dressing-gown, and bathe in the lake,—a boat lies handy, which we row ourselves. And then, an excellent breed of people: sympathy, obligingness, nay, the most affecting anxiousness to serve, whichever way we turn. More, and more reliable, friends than ever I could find in beautiful big Dresden. . . . Ah! how I pity you unhappy people there. . . . Can't you come to us at once?" He has faith in the bracing quality of this pure Swiss air, though he still is ailing: "My health is better:—true, I'm not quite strong yet, and mostly feel very tired,—but the nerve-trouble has much abated. Ah! before all things, let us but make our bodies sound!" Perpetually does he warn his late subordinate that his Dresden drudgery will be the death of him, and implore him to emigrate to Zurich. But not only Uhlig, every one he is fond of, he constantly adjures either to come on a visit, or to settle down in these salubrious surroundings. As for the Ritters, *their* taking root beside him seemed then merely a question of time; already young Karl, the eldest son, was provisionally a member of his household.

One thing alone would have tempted him to interrupt his quiet Zurich life. Never before had a work of his been given for the first time to the world by other hands; with the fullest confidence in Liszt's ability and loyalty, there were a thousand details in the staging of his *Lohengrin* that he alone could set to rights—to say nothing of the fact that this was a transitional work, and con-

sequently needed all the greater care to save it from the old routine. We therefore find him asking Liszt if it would not be possible to obtain from the Grand Duchess, or perhaps through Liszt's friend the Duke of Coburg, a free pass for him to Weimar and back, maybe under an assumed name ; promising to preserve his incognito with stoical strictness, and not to let a word leak out before or after. It was difficult to realise that he should be regarded as a dangerous person, or one deserving persecution ; but he now had to learn the unrelentingness of official German policy, prohibiting the most liberal-minded among German princes from extending a hand to the whilom "revolutionary."

Conveying this intimation, Liszt reassures him with an account of the extraordinary preparations on foot: the management has granted almost 2000 thalers (£300) for the mounting etc. ; a thing unheard-of in the memory of Weimar man. The occasion, too, is to be thoroughly unique. On August 25, midway in the theatrical holiday, a grand festival is to commence with the unveiling of a monument to Herder, followed by his *Prometheus Unbound* and Liszt's *Prometheus* music; on GOETHE'S birthday, August 28, in the presence of delegates assembled from all parts to discuss the projected Goethe-Stiftung, the festival is to culminate in *Lohengrin*, introduced by a poetical prologue written *ad hoc* by Franz Dingelstedt; after a second performance the theatre will be closed again for a month, thus marking the production as something quite out of the common. The whole company is already "fire and flame" for the work ; the violins are to be increased from 16 to 18, a bass-clarinet is to be bought, and Bernhard Cossmann, the eminent 'cellist, is to come from Paris to reinforce the orchestra; Liszt himself will take *all* the rehearsals, pianoforte, chorus and band; Intendant Zigesar regards the affair as an *event*, and Regisseur Genast will put all his energy into complying with Wagner's stage-directions. Above all, not a bar is to be omitted, saving that second half of Lohengrin's narration (act iii) which, after many a private experiment, the composer had convinced himself would form an anticlimax, and therefore excised from the text. Most comforting must have been this pledge as to cuts, for Wagner had implored Liszt in his letter from Thun : "Let me stand complete for once ! This time I took such pains to set the music in so sure and plastic a relation to the poem and action, that I believe I may be

absolutely certain of my affair. Rely on me, and don't put it down to enamouredness with my own work!"—Incidentally, we also hear of a recent Weimar performance of Gluck's *Iphigenia in Aulis* as revised by Wagner; Liszt is so delighted with it, that he begs for more in the future, namely revisions of *Alcestis*, *Orpheus*, *Armida* and *Iphigenia in Tauris;* but with Wagner's promise to consider the "excellent suggestion" the matter appears to have ended. Of greater moment is Liszt's proposal that *Siegfried's Tod* shall follow *Lohengrin* at Weimar as speedily as possible; again shewing his own advance in appreciation of Wagner's later style. Nothing could be more encouraging to a "poor devil" one of whose chief objects in desiring to witness the baptism of his *Lohengrin* had been "to gain, mayhap, a fresh incitement."

It was hard, to be shut out, as he sighs in one of a series of letters to Genast*: "At a distance, and without the testimony of one's senses, imagination plays havoc with the mind; for which reason ghosts are only seen, you know, by people not in a position to convince themselves by touch of the reality." And so we have letter after letter to Liszt, stage-manager Genast, and the highly-cultured young Intendant von Zigesar,† spurring them on, clearing up ambiguities, insisting on the peculiar nature of his work. To Liszt he had written from Paris, "What friends you have!" and now writes, "You *are* a friend! I'll say no more of that; but, if in masculine friendship I have always recognised the noblest and grandest of human relations, you realise that ideal to the full. Only yourself can thank yourself; for, if it is elevating to have a friend, still more is it to be one." Halfway through August, Liszt tells him they are "swimming in the æther of Lohengrin," holding rehearsals every day from 3 to 4 hours long; Zigesar, who will send the fee (25 to 30 louis d'or) by the end of the month, so fully shares his admiration, that on a recent

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* Partly unpublished, partly embedded in Genast's memoirs, *Aus dem Tagebuch eines alten Schauspielers.*

† There is a characteristic passage in a letter to Liszt of May 1851: "If you think I might allow myself a slight departure from the regulation Curial style, I would beg you shortly to convey a letter from me to the Weimar Grand Duchess. With that Curial style, however, I can do nothing.—Dear (foppish) Zigesar still writes to me, 'Your Well-bornness' etc.—If he would only drop it! Considering his amiable demeanour toward me, it pains me to have to clamber over such silly pipe-clay."

trip to Berlin he has put in a good word for *Tannhäuser* with the King and Prince of Prussia; N.B., will Wagner send a few metronomic directions for the principal scenes? Opposed though Wagner is to mechanical indications of tempo, and convinced that Liszt's intuition will have lit of itself on the proper rendering, he sends the metronomic register of about half a dozen crucial passages, apologising for the mere semblance of pettifogging: "You'll get it right of yourself—perhaps better than I." Nor is he insensible to the "frightful exertions" Liszt is making: "I know what they mean. When I saw you conduct a rehearsal of *Tannhäuser*, I knew exactly how we stood. . . . Foolish as it must sound, I beg you spare yourself—all you can." More than grateful, he is overjoyed: "Each time a letter arrives from you, high festival is held; every acquaintance is bidden in to hear it." His own agitation, however, is intense: "I put a strong curb on myself, and let no one near me mark it,—but to you I can say that my chagrin is great, not to be permitted to hear my work under your control! However, I endure so much, and shall endure this also—if only by imagining that I am dead."

Down to the last moment he sends messages to one or other of his Weimar allies, amplifying this or that, so that everything may correspond to the picture clear before his eye. So vivid is it in his thought, that he remembers even such a trifle as a grammatical slip, corrected in the final textbook, but not yet in the score; and three days before the performance he sends Genast another sheaf of scenic comments, including the important note: "I do not know what dramatic talent Herr Beck, the singer of Lohengrin, may possess; but in any case he must keep his eye on the principal point, the great closing scene of the third act. At the beginning of this scene, and with his impeachment of Elsa, he must be stern to annihilation, like an avenging god. After his narration and disclosure, however, from the words 'Ach! Elsa, was hast Du mir angethan?' his godlike rigour must dissolve into the most human of grief. Down to his departure, the most intense, most heart-rending, most poignant passion must constitute the keynote of the opera's close. He alone can produce the right effect, and none besides him; everything else will follow of itself. If a single human heart remains unshaken, it is *his* fault." Finally, to calm his own excitement, he intends "to pass the day and evening of the 28th upon the Rigi with his wife."

At Weimar the advent of this memorable day found the tiny Thuringian capital packed full of French and German notabilities; for Liszt not only had chosen the occasion well, but taken care that it should be well attended. On the first intimation young Bülow had written his mother, "If the production comes off, it will be a colossal event, and Weimar the metropolis of the world." And as capital of the artistic world, a precursor of Bayreuth, did Weimar really figure for the nonce. The most celebrated of musicians, artists and writers, both native and foreign, had met together for this famous "Herder-ceremony"; the railway brought hundreds of the curious from far and near. From France, among others, came Fétis and Gérard de Nerval (translator of Goethe's *Faust*). From London came Chorley of the *Athenæum*. From Dresden, so far as we are interested, came Gutzkow, Uhlig, the Ritters, Hans von Bülow and his mother. From Zurich came conductor Abt—and Karl Ritter, to whom we shall return. Eight-and-thirty had been the preliminary rehearsals, now followed by two semi-public dress rehearsals on August 26 and 27. The great night itself was ushered in by Dingelstedt's prologue, recited by court-actor Jaffé, a respectable piece of court-verse, decorously apostrophising the spirit that had ruled Thuringia from the times of the Wartburg Minstrels' Contest to the classical epoch of German poetry, and shewed the same enlightenment to-day. One might have thought that *Lohengrin* had no need of any other prelude than its own; in fact, that this prologue could only do harm, by adding to the length of the evening. Officially, however, it was honourably meant; as a matter of course, it was loudly applauded.

But how about the reception of the opera itself?—In a measure, that was disappointing; a disappointment—if we may be allowed the paradox—almost to be expected. Liszt covers it decently up in his letter of September 2, but the mere fact of a repetition not being given at once, as originally intended, may be accepted as an index: "From one end to the other, your Lohengrin is sublime. At many a passage, tears welled from my heart. . . . Our first performance was comparatively satisfactory; Herr von Bülow, who will see you soon, can supply you with a correct account of it. The second will not be able to take place for 10 or 12 days. The Court and various intellectual Weimar personages are filled with sympathy and admiration for your

work.* As for the mass of the public, it certainly will reckon it an honour to applaud and think beautiful what it cannot understand. . . . With regard to the fate of this masterpiece, you may be entirely at ease about Weimar, though it certainly is a little astonished at having such works set before it.—Before the end of the winter, however, *Lohengrin* will necessarily become a 'draw.'"

The important point for Wagner's future, was that LOHENGRIN should have been produced, and fairly well produced, at a German court and in circumstances of considerable éclat, at a time when its author was politically under a very heavy cloud: that its first reception was a little cold, need not surprise us, even had the work been rendered perfectly. But, truth to tell, the performance had *not* been perfect, save in the orchestral department: "Dingelstedt's review† has made a great impression on me," says Wagner. "He speaks of the effect upon him of the flutes, the violins, the drums and trumpets, but not a word of the dramatic exponents; in whose stead, to judge by his expressions, it was those instruments, forsooth, that spoke. From this I gather that the *purely-musical element* preponderated much in that performance; that the orchestra—as I have likewise been assured by judges—was excellent, and friend Liszt—with all that depended immediately on him—was the actual hero of the representation." As usual in matters of artistic criticism, Wagner has his finger on the spot in a moment: whatever *Liszt* could do, was done; but everything had depended on Liszt, who had never seen a work of Wagner's on another stage, except *Rienzi*. It would be as unjust as unreasonable, to hold Liszt responsible for more than his own department: the whole art of rendering Wagnerian Drama was as new as the creation itself, and hitherto had only one practitioner. Liszt's own artistic antecedents were of the "purely musical" order; the production of *Lohengrin*, with all the correspondence that it led to, before and *after*, formed his first real lesson in this novel art. His genius was displayed in the marvellous intuition

* The Grand Duchess was unable to be present, either at this or the second performance, if we are to go by Wagner's letter of next March to Liszt, but the Heir Apparent was a host in himself.

† To be dealt with hereafter.—Letter 41 of the *W.-L. Correspondence* (Sept. 8, 1850), from which the above and certain subsequent extracts are taken, forms with Letter 42 (to Zigesar next day) a complete little essay on musico-dramatic representation.

with which he had seized the *composer's* intentions; but to him the *dramatist* was a book the first of whose seven seals he now was breaking. It should have been the care of others, to see that the singers intelligently *acted* their parts.

As for those singers, the earliest singers of *Lohengrin*, it is only fair that their names should be recorded; for, with the exception of the exponent of the title-rôle, they honestly seem to have worked with a will, to the best of their lights. "Elsa" was sung by Aghte, "Ortrud" by Fasztlinger, "Telramund" by Milde, "König Heinrich" by Höfer—and "Lohengrin" by Beck. The last-named must have improved in course of time, for Princess Wittgenstein quite raves about his "Lohengrin" some four years later (the good lady was always rather addicted to hyperbole*); but at this première he nearly wrecked the work, according to that Letter 41 from Wagner to Liszt: "Only the representative of Lohengrin appears to me—from all accounts—to be downright incapable. Would it not be possible to change the cast here? I had always fancied that people must be glad whenever Lohengrin but treads the stage,—on the contrary, it seems they were gladder when he left it." And Liszt himself, after the *second* performance, can say no more for this tenor, than, "Herr Beck, who gives the title-rôle, shews a very laudable zeal not to remain below the level of his task. What is more, he begins to feel enthusiasm for his rôle and the composer." Begins, indeed!—when the gala night is over. If Tichatschek had only begun to feel enthusiasm for "Rienzi" *after* the first performance, very probably we should never have heard of *Lohengrin* at all.

Apart from the lukewarmness of the tenor—a most serious reservation—who is to blame that this laboriously-prepared event fell flat, so far as concerns the general public? Alike Liszt, Zigesar, and apparently Genast, blame that public itself; but Wagner probes the deeper sore. It was the constitutional disease of that hoary sinner, Opera: "In Dresden I made the discovery that only through the printed textbook did the audience make

* It is amusing to compare her transports (No. 163 *Wagner-Liszt Corr.*) with a letter of young Bülow's to Uhlig of February 1852: "Beck has been too lazy to learn his rôle [in Berlioz' *Cellini*]. These people like nothing but *Martha* to 'sing.' *Lohengrin* also is fatal to him; after the recent performance he told me he was positively determined not to sing this *unthankful*, *exacting* part again."

itself familiar with the dramatic contents of *Tannhäuser*. . . . Are your singers at Weimar farther advanced than our celebrated Dresdeners? I trow not. . . . The object of a rational opera is *the drama;* and that, most decidedly, is in the hands of *the performers on the stage*. It distresses me to perceive that these performers so vanished from Dingelstedt's ken, that in their stead he merely heard the speech of instruments; for this shews me that in fire and expression they lagged behind the orchestral support. I admit that the singer who is supported by an orchestra in such a fashion must be of the very highest quality; I also believe that such performers may not be easy to meet with, not merely in Weimar, but anywhere in Germany. But what, after all, is the main essential? Is it the voice alone?—certainly not! 'Tis *life* and *fire*—and withal an earnest diligence and strenuous will." As for the poor "public," that universal scapegoat, "Give me any public you like, so long as it has *unvitiated senses and a human heart;* only, I must be certain that the dramatic action has simply been rendered more directly comprehensible to it by the music, not—shall we say?—eclipsed. Now, to myself the representation of my Lohengrin appears to have been inadequate to this extent, that its purely musical part was very much more perfect than the part dramatic; and the blame for *that* I lay on no one but the general condition of our whole Opera, which exerts the most bewildering and vicious influence on all our singers from the start. If the music *alone* was remarked on, nay, mostly *but* the orchestra, you may be sure the performers stayed far behind their task." (This last to Intendant von Zigesar, September 9.)

What, then, had the stage-manager been thinking of? Wagner's reference to that functionary is a masterpiece of tact: "Genast was always one of those actors to whom the regisseur had no need to explain the meaning of his rôles: whoever once saw and heard him, knows that. So, now that he himself is regisseur, he certainly must deem it unbecoming to play to singers the part of schoolmaster, never having needed one himself. But in this he is mistaken: the present generation is a wilding from its birth. I can quite understand that, even in his friendly zeal for this work of mine, he has confined himself to that correct attitude of the Regisseur who makes his general arrangements, and leaves it to the individual performers to devise for themselves what con-

cerns *them* alone. Nevertheless, I now beg of him to overstep the natural province of a Regisseur: let him become the succourer of infant performers! . . . Before the resumption of Lohengrin, let Genast—whom I most sincerely thank for his friendship—call the whole cast together for a *book-rehearsal;* and let the singers jointly *read aloud* their rôles from the printed text-books, distinctly and with expression. Moreover, let Genast take the score, and, following the directions to be found there, expound to the singers the meaning of each situation and its precise connection with the music, bar by bar—and the Devil must be in it, if with any good will on the performers' part the thing doesn't then come out right. Once again: let Genast go beyond his post of Regisseur, the duties of which he certainly fulfils as well as any man, and become *guardian of orphans and minors.*" How necessary was the adjuration, may be judged from the case discussed by Wagner at some length: Ortrud's menacing gesture at the end of act ii was simply omitted through sheer ignorance, and the curtain came down before the 'interdiction-motive' could be sounded by the orchestra!*

How was Wagner so minutely informed of the faults in this Weimar production? Besides conductor Abt of Zurich, for whom he had begged of Liszt a seat, he had three young friends among the audience, each of whom despatched him a report within a day or two: Uhlig, von Bülow—and above all Karl Ritter, who had gone to Weimar as Wagner's representative, armed with the closest knowledge of the score. It was rather an uncomfortable position for Liszt, and it is greatly to his honour that he carried it off with his usual angelic temper; but it was an occasion of vital moment to Wagner, this launching of a ship without its captain, and there could be no standing upon ceremony. With the hot-bloodedness of youth, Karl Ritter made himself somewhat obnoxious at Weimar through his diatribes on the first performance (? the dress rehearsals also), and Liszt jokingly compared him to a *représentant du comité du salut public: "suspect—*

* So sorely had it rankled in the author's mind, that he devotes a page of *Opera and Drama* next year to this and a kindred solecism in a Weimar performance of *Tannhäuser* (see *Prose Works* II. 368). But what are we to say to an Ortrud who gave people the impression of being a rival to Elsa in Telramund's affections? Yet that is how Princess Wittgenstein naïvely refers to the first exponent of the rôle in a letter of January 1852 to Wagner.

guillotiné"; but under the soothing influence of the Weimar master's amiability the young man modified his tone, and at dinner in the Erbprinz next day good relations were so far re-established that Liszt begged him "not to paint him too black to Wagner." Young Bülow, who relates these details in a letter to his mother of September 2, adds that he himself had written Wagner on the 29th, "to paralyse Ritter, in case he had been too merciless; but R. has seen the injustice of his criticisms, and, as we both believe, Liszt is sure to receive from Wagner nothing but words of thanks." As we have already seen, Liszt received from Wagner something *more* than "words of thanks," yet nothing but appreciative gratitude for his own share in the production. Karl Ritter returned to Zurich on the 10th with a full verbal report, and Liszt in his next letter to Wagner (Sept. 16) begs to be "kindly remembered to Herr Ritter, to whom I am much indebted for not having told you too bad things about our first performance; the second was far more satisfactory, and the third and particularly the fourth are bound to be still more so." *

Wagner had insisted on his opera being given "for once" without cuts: evidently the Weimar people read that stipulation as applying only to the first night, for we hear through young Bülow (letter just cited) that so early as the second morning following it there was a "cutting rehearsal" with the object of reducing *Lohengrin* by about three quarters of an hour, the opera having lasted on August 28 for nearly five, from 6 to close upon 11 P.M., though no one appears to have made a deduction for Dingelstedt's tiresome prologue. The most pressing of letters and messages are sent to Wagner by Genast and Zigesar, im-

* More than two years later (Dec. 27, '52) Liszt himself admits: "With the representation of *Lohengrin* I still am very dissatisfied in part; the chief evil, as you have said, lies in the exponent of the title-rôle not being yet born. A new scene is being prepared for the second act, as our present one is miserable." Nor can the third set-piece have been much better, for he writes Dec. 29, '53: "I still have many holes to pick in the representation of your works here.—Our chorus, in particular, for me is most inadequate,—several of the scenes are downright bad.—These accessories, however, are gradually improving, as the *treasurer* himself has gained respect for your works now.—A new Wartburg-hall, for instance, is being painted for next year, also a new Bridal-chamber for the third act of *Lohengrin*, etc.; whilst several somewhat costlier dresses are on order."—The first three sentences of the last quotation are unaccountably omitted in Dr Hueffer's translation.

ploring his consent to mutilation, and once more setting him in a fever of alarm. His foot must be set down at once, or never after; for an artistic principle was involved here, the integrity of a close-knit *drama:* "If I do not win this battle, and have to capitulate with such a powerful ally as yourself by my side"—he writes to Liszt September 8, two days before Karl Ritter's return—"*I take the field no more!* If my Lohengrin can only be kept afloat by rending its nicely-calculated artistic texture,—in a word, if it must be *cut* for sake of the performers' slackness—*I abandon Opera altogether.*" In the fine letter of September 9 to Zigesar also: "What for you is an occasion of benevolence towards me, for me, alas! is the vital question of my whole artistic existence, to which my very being hangs with bleeding nerves." Such seriousness had its effect on the artistic conscience of the Weimar circle—for a time; it was impossible to resist an appeal so frank and yet so dignified, so passionate and withal so self-oblivious. Liszt—whose docility, under what the average patron would have resented as unwarrantable impudence, is the brightest jewel in his crown—replies Sept. 16: "At the second performance [two days previously] not the tiniest syllable did we retrench from your Lohengrin; after your letter, in my opinion, it would have been a baseness to have ventured the smallest cut. As I have already had occasion to tell your friends who were here on August 28, the representation of your works, so long as you entrust me with their absolute control, is for me superlatively a case of principle and honour."

The Battle of the Cuts, however, is not yet over. Zigesar and Genast feel it their duty "to make a few remarks in the interest of the work"; which remarks, says Liszt, "I have declined to lay before you, though I find them somewhat justified by the infirmities alike of our theatre and our public; which still are far behind my wishes, nay, even my hopes. Should you really think fit to consent to some cuts, I beg you simply to let me know your decision; whether it be that you accept those which Genast is about to lay before you, or suggest others in their place, or finally (as is probable) that you desire your work to be kept entire, as we twice have given it—I pledge my honour that your will shall be punctiliously executed with all the respect and submission you have a right to claim in virtue of your genius and your works." Then Genast's list of proposed amputations arrives,

with a plaint for the weak-kneed audience. By this time Wagner must have been pretty sick of the business, for his answer to Genast (Sept. 23) is a thinly-veiled snub: "As I perceive, you now have less anxiety for excellence of the performance, but rather that the opera and my main intentions should gain easier access to, and lasting effect with, the so-called larger public. To this you attach the wish to break a path for my operas in general, and offer yourself as builder of a bridge to span the possible gulf between. I must leave it entirely to your judgment, how you think good to proceed with a purpose so friendly toward me, and can but rejoice that I have won allies with such zeal for myself and works that they even deceive themselves about the nature of the cause at stake. . . . These people who leave the theatre after the second act of Lohengrin, are neither fatigued by its length, nor deafened by its noise; but, the better their inclinations, the more have they succumbed to the unwonted strain of having to digest a dramatic portrayal that does not address itself to the quarter or half, but to the whole man. Look a little closer, and you will be bound to agree with me. If you really wish to educate the public, before all you must educate it to strength, must drive the sloth and slackness from its philistine limbs, and guide it to seek at the theatre, not distraction, but *concentration*. If you do not train the public to such an exercise of strength in art-enjoyment, your friendly zeal will neither spread my works nor my intentions. For a performance of their trilogies the Athenians sat from mid-day into night, and quite certainly they were nothing more than human; but what they were, was, *active* even in their enjoyment. This, most honoured friend, is my reply to your arguments in general. If I fail to convince you, I shall have to leave you to exhibit your care for my work as best you can; but you must not take it ill of me, if I behold in your measures at most a warrant of success with the worthy philistines of Weimar, by no means of the circulation of my operas. As for that success, my concern with it is not excessive." Touching the cuts submitted for approval, Wagner would *prefer to hear nothing about it* for the future: "In every instance I could demonstrate to you, no doubt convincingly, how painfully it wounds my feeling of artistic honour. I ask, in what a frame of mind, with what enthusiasm blighted in advance, I am to approach the composition of my next musical drama, when in working out its most keenly-felt and closely-pondered

motives I have to remember the passages my best friends deemed omissible from Lohengrin?"—Yet there was no bad blood on either side: on October 2 we hear: "I wrote to Genast a few days since. (This ghastly haggling about penn'orths of cuts goes quite against my grain.) For all that, Genast is a capital good fellow."

And Wagner won the day. True, there is no definite record of the decision of the Weimar people at the time; but the message of "best greetings to Zigesar" that follows the above—with, "this warm and loyal heart does me good indeed"—may be taken to imply that the Intendant had struck his colours and agreed with Liszt that Wagner's operas must be given "entirely *selon le bon plaisir de l'auteur*." At anyrate in Letter 76 (Spring 1852) Liszt writes in pursuance of the words last-cited, "We consequently must give Lohengrin uncut as of yore"; and in Letter 91 (Dec. 27, '52), "Of cuts, as you are aware, there was a question only with the 2nd performance; but already with the 3rd I had the whole work given again unmutilated."* After the third performance, however, there came a six-months pause, originating with Liszt's holiday, and maintained by causes to be dealt with in Chapter IV.

Liszt had not confined himself to producing *Lohengrin*, and producing it with the most affectionate expenditure of time and trouble. Having skilfully linked the production with a ceremony in honour of two of Germany's most famous poets, he took care that the Press should be supplied, for once, with favourable criticisms—borrowing a leaf from the book of friend Meyerbeer. "You are springing every mine; wherever I look, I light on you and your more than friendly forethought for me," writes Wagner on October 2.

The earliest of the mines to be sprung, was that in the German equivalent of our *Times*, the miner being Franz Dingelstedt, author of that time-devouring prologue. Unfortunately, his train was none too intelligently laid, and spluttered into fireworks more

* From a previous letter of Liszt's we have already learnt that the second performance was given *without* cuts: therefore, either it never actually came to a cut performance at all during Liszt's tenure of office at Weimar, or at this somewhat distant date he has confounded the 2nd with the 3rd performance (Oct. 9) and the 3rd with the 4th (Apr. 12, '51).

likely to scare than edify the curious. A personal desire to oblige is evident in his concluding paragraph: "Shall I say whither roamed my silent thoughts, more than once, on that night of din and glamour? To the outlaw in Switzerland, so far away, yet in our midst." But, if it was injudicious to refer to the *exile*, the allusion to a night of noise (*an jenem glanz- und geräuschvollen Abend*) could not possibly have been more tactless; for it sums up in one epithet remarks already made on "absence of repose" and an instrumentation that "deprives the spectator at last of sight and hearing." *

After reading this lucubration, one cannot but endorse the annoyance expressed by Wagner in that same "mines" letter to Liszt: "Best of friends, you have been so boundlessly solicitous for me in *every* respect, that I cannot but regret to see your labours so crookedly responded-to at times. In Dingelstedt's review two things have struck me: the benevolence towards myself which you have sown in him, and his total incapacity, for all his pretty gift of letters, to grasp the merest inkling of his subject. The entire confusion into which he fell, on listening to my opera, he has the assurance to transfer to my intention and my work itself: he, who seems to have been in a position to remark nothing in my opera but drums, trombones and double-basses, naturally could not see the forest for its trees! Nevertheless he is a clever writer with a ready pen, throws off a flashy piece of flummery, which he couldn't have improved on if he had meant to make fun of me, and—sends it to the *most widely-circulated* of all the papers printed in the German tongue. Were I really concerned to make a name, I should say that Dingelstedt had done me serious injury. For I read in journals following the lead of his report, that 'Wagner again has written an opera in which he appears to have outdone his own Rienzi in windy noise.'" And again, a week later, "About to set forth [in *Opera and Drama*] my views on the essence of Musical Drama, nothing could be more disturbing to me, than to see the most contradictory opinions of me once more launched upon the public by able men of letters. What a charlatan must the world consider me,

* In the Appendix will be found the whole of Dingelstedt's report, so far as it concerns Wagner and his *Lohengrin*. The article appeared in the supplement of the Augsburg *Allgemeine Zeitung* for Sept. 4, 1850.

if, all the time my words are preaching Drama, my works are credited with deafening musical noise!"—Once more was Wagner correct in his estimate: that "man of letters," and admirer to oblige, became Intendant at Munich about this very time; but not till his seven years of office were over, was *Lohengrin* produced there; whilst his subsequent assumption of the Intendance at Weimar led by degrees to Liszt's own severing of all connection with the theatre.

Luckily Liszt had more than one species of literary help. His own contribution to the *Journal des Débats* did not appear till October 22,* but one of his French guests at the Weimar production had meantime entered the lists as Wagner's champion, in the feuilleton of the Paris *Presse*. Here and there de Nerval's article betrays an almost comical misunderstanding of the plot but, as Wagner remarked at the time, "There's many an error in it; yet that really counts for nothing. The man has drawn a picture, from what you told him of me, that clearly and distinctly shews at least my aim.—The worst abomination is a German literary fop!" So much for France, or rather Paris, for the present. In Germany, Joachim Raff was told off for the *Deutsche Allg. Zeitung* (Brockhaus' paper); Uhlig undertook the *Neue Zeitschrift;* even the chronically hostile *Signale* had an article from the pen of J. C. Lobe (Sept. 11) that surprised and gladdened *Lohengrin's* creator; whilst the Frankfort *Konversationsblatt* was served by a Weimar barrister (ultimately Regierungsrath) Franz Müller, whose subsequent studies of *Tannhäuser*, the *Ring*, *Tristan*, etc., are still to be numbered among Wagnerian classics.

It really was a rift in the clouds, and, overcome once more by this delightfully new experience, Wagner writes to his comrade on Christmas Eve: "Verily, you've made your little Weimar a perfect hotbed for my fame. When I compare the many, comprehensive, and often very able articles on Lohengrin, that issue now from Weimar, with the envious hostility of the Dresden critics for instance, and the obstinacy with which they pursued a wellnigh systematic bamboozling of the public—this Weimar seems to me

* To be dealt with in Chapter IV. It should be mentioned that Jules Janin editor of the *Débats*, had been announced as a prospective visitor, but did not personally attend the festival.

a blessed oasis, in which at last I may breathe deep and ease my bursting heart."

For his artistic future this Weimar production of *Lohengrin* was in every respect the turn of the scale. Not immediately, however, was the effect upon either the public or its theatrical caterers to make itself felt, nor immediately was the somewhat dubious prospect to draw the artist into fresh creative work. It was a time, certainly not of indecision, but of clearing the ground. In Liszt himself he realised that he had found a true artistic brother, that they had "met at the very heart of Art"; but the mere fact that, "with so powerful an ally" by his side, neither the singers nor the 'superior' section of the public had thoroughly grasped his purpose, made him hesitate before answering Liszt's laconic question of September 2, "*A quand Siegfried?*" Before he could engage once more in composition, there was much to be thought out for himself, many a misconception to be eradicated from the mind of others: "Eh! eh! dear good Liszt," he writes Nov. 25, "I owe it to you that I soon can be nothing but artist again"—and the *soon* should be noted. "I consider the ultimate resumption of my artistic plans as one of the most decisive moments in my life. Between the musical completion of my Lohengrin and that of my Siegfried there lies a world of storm for me, but also—I know it—of fruitfulness. I have a whole lifetime behind me to clear up, to bring all its glimmerings to full consciousness, to let reflection thoroughly work itself out—so that I may throw myself once more with clear and cheerful mind into the sweet unconsciousness of art-creation. So I shall devote all this winter to a final clearance of the past." With this object he had begun by now his *Opera and Drama*, and already foreshadows the publication of his "Three Romantic Opera-poems with a preface explaining their genesis" (the *Communication to my Friends*). To make his "clearance" thorough, he further proposes to collect "the best of his Paris articles of ten years since for a perhaps not unamusing volume"—a project contemplated six years back, but not to be fulfilled till 1871.* Then, having traced his artistic tendence to

* That he had meditated a reprint of these earlier writings even before the completion of *Tannhäuser*, we ascertain from a letter to Carl Gaillard of October 1844, where he demurs to their appearing in his friend's *Berliner Musikzeitung* for the following reason: "The matter of those literary skirmishings has acquired a peculiar weight for me, as in them I voiced my

its very origin, for the benefit of "whoever may be interested," he will "set to work on Siegfried in the Spring, and finish it without a break." It will be another *Siegfried*, though, and something more.

Reserving for our next chapter an analytical consideration of all this group of literary tasks, we must first take note of Wagner's outward efforts in the winter of 1850-51.

As already mentioned, Karl Ritter had accompanied him on his Swiss tour in the early summer, and taken up his abode in Zurich in July, at first residing in the Wagners' house. From the Weimar *Lohengrin* he returned to make Zurich his regular home for some few years to come, with the intention of developing his musical talent under Wagner's practical tuition. His wish to become a conductor was met by Wagner with objections, fully ratified as time wore on; but, as the young man was most keen to try his 'prentice hand, an arrangement was eventually come to with the new lessee of the Zurich theatre, W. Kramer. The latter would have preferred that Wagner himself should assume the conductorship, at the ridiculous monthly wage of 200 francs with liberty to employ his pupil as deputy whenever he pleased; but he had to rest content with Wagner's promise that in any case the programme should not suffer by his young friend's inexperience.

A promise most faithfully kept; for Ritter does not appear to have actually conducted more than a rehearsal or two. At the very first, Wagner was so astonished by the general excellence of the company,* especially the tenor Baumhauer and a prima donna (Frau Rauch-Wernau) possessed alike of voice and brains, that

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whole artistic confirmation of those days. As all those various articles have a certain point of union—since almost all of them might pass as extracts from the diary of a German musician who was starved to death in Paris—I have made up my mind that my next undertaking, after finishing my opera, shall be the publication of that diary, with an anecdotal preface. Therefore it would be a mistake to warm up those articles beforehand."

* See the letter to Uhlig of Oct. 22, 1850, also "A Theatre at Zurich," *Prose Works* III. 25-6.—For the dates of performances, extracts from the *Eidg. Ztg*, and many other particulars relating to Zurich in this and subsequent chapters, I have gratefully to acknowledge my indebtedness to Herr A. Steiner's extremely valuable articles constituting the "New Year's Gift" of the Zurich Allg. Mus.-Gesellschaft for 1901 and 1902.—W. A. E.

he considered it unfair to introduce them to the public under so raw a tyro's lead: he therefore took the baton himself at the first performance of the season, *Der Freischütz*, Oct. 4, and the second, the *Dame blanche*, on that day week. Naturally this put an entirely fresh complexion on the whole affair: on the one hand, he himself had discovered that this third-rate theatre was not the "trumpery affair" he dubbed it when informing Uhlig of his intention to use it as Ritter's nursery; on the other, the finished renderings he had managed to extract from the scanty orchestral means at disposal had caused quite a sensation among the better-cultured classes of the place. Anxious as he was to keep his hands free, the very earnestness of his experiment had created a situation from which it would be difficult to withdraw before he had satisfied his conscience that neither the public nor the company would suffer by his laying down the reins.

Both sides of the situation are well illustrated by the following extracts from the contemporary *Eidgenössische Zeitung*. After the first performance, editor Spyri writes: "Herr Wagner undertook the conducting of Weber's immortal opera purely out of an interest in the cause of art, and we are delighted that the audience appreciated his sacrifice in accommodating himself to our straitened conditions. With such a leader to put spirit and life into the interpretation of a composition, our degenerated art-taste would very soon be raised again. . . . It should be specially noted that, attracted by Wagner's genius, several recognised artists and amateurs of this city took part in the band," and so on. After the second performance the singers are praised for the second time; then comes a confession: "Under Richard Wagner's master-hand the orchestra, too long a mere hodman that occasionally spoilt the very best effects, resumed its true position as a necessary factor in the elevation of the whole. It cannot be denied, of course, that the chief merit for such successes belongs to Herr Wagner himself; but we also have ground for believing that he would never have taken so great an interest in our theatre, if he had not found in it a kindly soil for his intentions." In the same journal, of a week later, Wagner corroborates that statement; but to us it will be more convenient to defer his public declaration for the present.

Meanwhile young Hans von Bülow, now getting on for twenty-

one, had made his entry on the scene, under highly dramatic conditions. After the dissolution of his parents' marriage in the autumn of 1849, Hans had accompanied his mother and sister to Berlin, where, by the wish alike of father and mother, he entered the university to complete his Leipzig study of Law, though his heart was pining for a more congenial career. At Berlin he still kept in occasional touch with Wagner, either by direct correspondence, or through Uhlig; whilst his father himself would appear to have sent him news about the master of his choice from time to time, for Hans tells Uhlig on November 7, 1849: "I shall write to Wagner this week; and, as my father is in Zurich at present, probably I shall hear about him pretty often. The *Wibelungen* hasn't arrived yet; a review of *Art and Revolution*, with synopsis, I sent to the democratic paper here [the *Abendpost*] a fortnight back." His letters, to no matter whom, are simply full of Wagner, in every form. We have seen in what ecstatic terms he wrote to his mother in May 1850, on the first tidings of the coming production of *Lohengrin* at Weimar; there we also met him with her. The ultimate effect of that production was, in this case, a rupture between mother and son—probably the earliest external instance of the domestic dissension so often caused by the intensely active ferment of Wagnerian art. A fortnight afterwards (Sept. 10) young Hans arrived at Ötlishausen, a picturesque chateau recently bought by his father in Canton Thurgau as home for himself and second wife. Here the youth fought out, at first in silence, the battle which had been brought to issue by the clarion cry of *Lohengrin*, the battle twixt his inner calling and the habit of obedience to his parents' will. It was not merely that they objected to music as a profession beneath their rank of "von," but the mother had conceived a great dislike for Wagner the man, fearing his "revolutionary" influence over a son already much that way inclined. Hans, however, had formed a strong opinion of his own, and long ere this had recognised his master; it needed but that master's uttered call. Looking back (Jan. '51), he writes his sister: "You know the reverence and love I long have entertained for Wagner. I'm not quite sure if you understand it; but through this reverence, which follows from an understanding of his works, have I first come rightly to myself. It has gradually become clearer and clearer to me, that this reverence, this understanding, is the best germ in me, that by which,

did I only tend it well, I might become a man to fill a definite mission in the world. . . . In my opinion, every human being should earn his existence, should shew his fellow-men that he has a right *to be;* not run the risk of stealing the enjoyment of the earth from worthier ones. . . . My having recognised the greatest artistic phenomenon of our century, perhaps even of high importance in the history of the world—a recognition shared as yet by few—has woken an ambition in me, a sense of self, a thrill of life. It became clear to me that I might become *a property* of this man's spirit, his pupil, his apostle; and with an end like that in view, life seemed worth living."—Let not the reader laugh away these words as the mere gush of an impressionable, neurotic youth! They are simply the eloquent and frank expression of what many a man of sterner mould has felt since then; and in such sober earnest were they written, that their writer fulfilled them to the very letter, through a lifetime devoted to his master and that master's art. Next to Liszt, it is impossible to name a single musician who did so much for Wagner's cause, from first to last, as Hans von Bülow; on the threshold of young Bülow's public life we well may linger by a devotion that recalls—and in part may have been inspired by — the words the master himself once put in the mouth of his imaginary Pilgrim: "Though in time I also made acquaintance with other splendid music, I yet have loved, have honoured, worshipped Beethoven before all else. Henceforth I knew no other pleasure, than to plunge so deep into his genius that at last I fancied myself become a morsel of it; and as that tiniest morsel I began to respect myself, to come by higher thoughts and feelings—in brief, to develop into what sober people call an idiot. My madness, however, was of the mildest sort, and did no harm to any man; the bread I ate, in this condition, was very dry; the liquid that I drank, most watery" (*P.* VII. 22)—the last part of the quotation being equally applicable to young Hans with the first, save that his mother thought her son far worse than "idiot."

A few days after Hans' arrival at his father's new home, Wagner sent him an offer through Karl Ritter. The latter had evidently described to Wagner the profound effect produced by *Lohengrin* upon his comrade, perhaps also conveyed some more direct appeal to intervene at this crisis in the young man's life. However it arose, Wagner now offered Hans employment at

the Zurich theatre as colleague of his friend, "since two could profit by the exercise as well as one." Eduard von Bülow did not quite relish the project, in which he saw a definite extinction of his more conventional hopes for his son's career, but finally yielded a consent conditional on that of Hans' mother; to whom, in the abnormal delicacy of their present relations, he naturally felt that deference was due. Hans accordingly wrote to his mother from Ötlishausen on September 16, imploring her assent: "At least reflect upon it carefully, and wait two or three days before you inexorably refuse. I, too, have pondered well, before arriving at this result. Should you refuse permission—as I almost fear—I will certainly obey you, and return to Berlin * for the winter; but it is an open question, how long I can hold out there." To Wagner also did he write, passionately thanking him for so unrivalled an opportunity of developing his musical faculties, but expressing grave doubts of his mother's permitting him to break his legal studies off.

We have thus arrived at the main object of this incidental narrative. If the reader has been wearied by the preliminaries, we must plead as our excuse that, without their recital, he would have been in no position to estimate one of the most characteristic actions in Wagner's life—Wagner the "egoist," the man who "never interested himself in anyone unless it served his personal ends." Here was no question of advancing his own ends, in any conceivable way: a poor little provincial theatre, which could not possibly extend his fame; two young men to train, without reward, while *Siegfried's Tod* was waiting for its music, and his hands were full as they could be of literary labour; a proud and stubborn lady to conciliate, with whose antipathy against himself he must already have been amply acquainted. Most people, however obliging by nature, would have shrugged their shoulders and sat still. But Wagner had seen enough of this phenomenal youth, to convince himself that with Hans it was a question of intellectual life or death; and nothing should prevent his rescuing him. To Franziska von Bülow he consequently wrote September 19, 1850,† a letter worthy to be graven

* Which his mother had already left last Easter, to make her home again in Dresden.

† Included in *Briefe von Hans von Bülow* I. pp. 253-6 (Breitkopf und Härtel, 1895).

on the walls of every home where parents hold beneath their thumb the fate of gifted children. Unfortunately, space forbids our reproducing more than a few extracts :—

After reciting the circumstances of his proposal to Hans, Wagner proceeds : "Permit a man of ripe years, who has accustomed himself never to think or act by halves—so far as lay within his power—to express his views upon this case. I have followed the youthful evolution of your son with interest, and not apart from knowledge, but without ever exerting any influence on him save that of artistic example and the most prudent advice. I have observed that his love of art, and in particular of music, rests on no fleeting excitement, but on great, nay, unusual capacity. It has been with my approval, nay, at my incentive, that he nevertheless has occupied himself with serious scientific studies; for nothing is more repugnant to me, than a mere lessoned musician without higher general culture. At the wish of his family he gave himself to the study of jurisprudence ; full of piety towards his mother, he endeavoured even to acquire a liking for a pursuit he inwardly loathed ; and what is the plain and manifest result of all his efforts and experiences? The most emphatic conviction that he loves art, and music in particular, the more ardently and enduringly, the more he has measured that inclination against others. . . . You would wish your son at least to qualify as advocate, in order to keep that career open in case of difficulty in making his way with the artistic one. Though the providence of best maternal love is unmistakable in this, nevertheless I beg you to allow me the rejoinder, that I deem fulfilment of that wish injurious ; injurious to the further evolution of the character and vigour of your son, injurious to the maintenance of an unalloyedly affectionate relation between son and mother. . . . The root of all the worst of evils—and surely this is your experience—is distrust : if you exhibit this with regard to your son—and now, of all times—by compelling him to return to studies detested from the bottom of his heart, without the wish, without the bent, and hence without the prospect of ever drawing profit from them, you blight his eagerness for activity of all kinds, you dissipate and lame his powers, you lay the ground for a half-and-halfness that will cleave to all his life, and—beyond a possibility of doubt, you will reap that most uncoveted of harvests, the harvest of a love as ragged and distraught. Only with great grief can I think of a long series of years in my own life, during which I had completely severed myself, for similar reasons, from my good, but here misguided mother ; and yet I can no else than say, I wish your son an energy the equal of that owned by myself when I refused to let the very noblest tie in nature withhold me from my liberty of self-disposal ! . . . Do not think me impertinent, but actuated

by the purest human sympathy, if I plead with you: Give your willing, glad and swift consent to your son's not living one instant longer in constraint against his tried and reasoned inclination. . . . So will you win the satisfaction of calling an able, perhaps an eminent artist your son, of having given to the world a glad and self-reliant individual, of having gained and kept for yourself the exquisite enjoyment of that son and human being's truest and sincerest love!"

Words that might have melted a stone: but Franziska von Bülow was obdurate. As Wagner writes to her quondam husband just three weeks later: "Hans' mother has roundly declared that she considers my influence, as man, of danger to him. Not that I feel myself affronted, but since I perceive the impossibility of breaking down the mother's prejudice (without she honoured me with a closer personal acquaintance), I am therefore forced to silence toward Frau von Bülow." To his mother herself Hans writes soon thereafter (Oct. 26), "I cannot believe that your invincible antipathy for the man I reverence so highly—the man whose warm and hearty sympathy, whose fatherly solicitude, have earned the greatest claims upon my love and gratitude—can really be so overpowering as to tear your son completely from your heart. And even were it possible that your dislike of the noblest, most loveworthy and reverable of men should be so deeply rooted at this moment as to have the upper hand—I hope the future will incline you to a milder, more conciliable mood, make you more tolerant of contrary views and opinions, maybe imbue you with a little esteem and interest for the man to whom, in a certain sense, my heart had committed the definite decision of my path in life even before I came to Switzerland on a visit to my father." To no purpose: the roots of that antipathy had bored so deep in Dresden soil that even next January, after Hans had given up Zurich, he has to allude to a message from his mother in the following terms: "I will do everything in my power to expedite a reconciliation; but the condition of total severance from Wagner I distinctly reject." And when at Christmas 1851, i.e. over a year later, he goes to Dresden for the long-deferred atonement, the mother is still so unflinching in her abomination of Wagner that she extends it to his other ward, Karl Ritter, absolutely forbidding her son to call upon or see his former comrade, though they are then within a stone's throw of each other. To Frau Ritter it must have been a revelation of the unreasoning rancour

of some members of her sex; to Wagner the contrast between the mothers of his two young friends must have given a further insight into life, and more than Minna may thus have sat as unconscious model for his "Fricka."

All this time we have left our Hans upon the horns of a dilemma. His mother had obstinately refused consent; his father kept on urging him to drop the idea. But, as he writes his sister some three weeks later (Oct. 26), "There was nothing for it, but to act as I have acted; and neither do I repent it now, nor, so I hope, shall I ever. I had almost let myself be persuaded by papa to return to Berlin, without even seeing Wagner; when Ritter, sent by Wagner, brought me a letter from him, which determined me to start for Zurich without delay, and take the position of conductor at the theatre under Wagner's guidance. We made the journey on foot in two days: at first, to escape any possible overtaking by papa; later, because I wished to see if I had energy enough to cover the trifling distance in the most terrible weather, a continual downpour. Strange to say, it did me no harm. I arrived dead-beat, but by next morning I had recovered and was fairly lively." What else could the spirited lad have done, if he did not mean to wreck his life? In the same letter to his mother of October 26, from which we have already quoted, he tells her: "After another year and a half of semi-slumber at my legal studies, my life would have been broken, spoilt, unsouled. I had fancied I might hold out, indeed; but at Leipzig, as well as Berlin, I was often near forming a desperate resolve to execute the step I now have taken. Wagner's letters to Ötlishausen accelerated my resolve, brought it to completion. With Wagner, living close to him and learning to become an artist under his practical direction is tautology; for the ambition I have, is to become an artist, no mere musician such as in Berlin, Leipzig and so on there would have been an equal opportunity [shade of Mendelssohn!]. . . . Papa appears to have thought it his duty not to cross your plans and wishes; he never ceased working at me; so that, almost persuaded, I had resigned myself. Then Wagner suddenly sent Ritter to me with a letter: that one letter entirely upset my resignation; that letter made all clear to me; that letter prompted me to go on foot to Zurich; that letter, and still more my talk with Wagner, brought me to the fixed intention to pass this winter here with him, in Zurich;

and no one can talk me out of it." We have quoted only the part that bears on Wagner, but the intense filial affection pervading the rest of this letter, and several others on the same subject, simply throws into higher relief the self-command with which the lad had seized the opening that was indeed to make of him "an artist" known throughout the world.

Before Hans had taken the bull by the horns, his father had written to Wagner, explaining that the only reason for his opposition was a desire not to wound the feelings of his former wife, and asking Wagner's advice as to the best mode of studying music in *Berlin*—an ineffectual compromise. This letter must have reached its destination almost simultaneously with the despatch of Karl Ritter to Ötlishausen, i.e. about the end of the first week in October. How was Wagner to answer it, now that Hans had solved the problem for himself? With the youngster already in his tutelary guard, he was under the moral obligation of addressing a man who, whether he seriously meant it or not, had forbidden his son "even to pay me a visit at Zurich during his stay in Switzerland." It was an extremely delicate situation, but Wagner handles it with a natural tact far surpassing that of Liszt's polished but indefinite appeal of Sept. 28 to Hans' mother.* There was no possible use in beating the bush; plain speech was here the best diplomacy, if a reconciliation of conflicting wishes were ever to be accomplished. A few sentences from the close of this letter, dated October 12, must suffice as specimen:—

I have taken it upon me to cross your instant purpose. I had to tell myself that in this emergency I was in a better position to judge your son, his faculties, and what is needful for their full development, than his own parents, who herein have been without real sympathy for him. In his last letter to me, Hans gave me the painful impression of someone under pressure in every regard: as, however, one of his grounds of anxiety was the question of his maintenance at Zurich, should he come here against his parents' wish, it was gratifying to me to be able to reassure him at least upon this point by an exact account of the position open to him here, so that I could leave him to decide according to which of his inclinations might be the stronger.—Karl Ritter wished to see and speak with Hans in person: after receipt of my letter, your son felt moved to put an end to all uncertainty; and that in a way which undoubtedly must wound you if you were acting

* Also published in *Briefe von Hans von Bülow* I.

after your own mind in debarring your son from Zurich, but of which you will inwardly approve if you were not a free agent, when you consider the advantage it gives you, as regards his mother, that Hans' step was taken entirely without your connivance.—In either case I must take the hazard of its now pleasing you to learn that your son has truly surprised me by the stage at which he has already arrived as artist; that I have found in him a quite extraordinarily talented and rapidly developed artist, and set hopes so great on him that—forgive me!—I am prepared to bear with any dislike I may have incurred with you, for the present, in barter for those hopes; for I know that even the said dislike will certainly be cancelled by your observation of the issue. Eh! I know that some-day you will thank me to the full as much as you love your son!

And Wagner brought about the desired reconciliation, between father and son at least. Eduard von Bülow posted off to Zurich at once; arrived in time, apparently, to hear the first opera conducted by Hans; and—left his son in Wagner's charge, washing his hands of all responsibility, but on sufficiently cordial terms for Hans to send him a detailed account of operations at the Zurich theatre not long thereafter (Nov. 9). It is a striking instance of the magical effect of Wagner's personality. Nor was his prophecy falsified, for next January we have Eduard writing to a relative in glowing terms of a performance of *Der Freischütz* at St Gallen, which "Hans conducted *without looking at the score*, in all respects a *master*." In fact this son became in time the greatest conductor of his day, the first and foremost of that series of his master's pupils who have carried on his work of revolutionising the art of Conducting, redeeming it from the sloth of soulless philistines and the Mendelssohn veneer.

At Zurich Hans von Bülow joined his comrade in lodgings four flights high: "On a monthly wage of 50 gulden we two, Ritter and I, must manage till New Year. Morning coffee is cut off; we concoct and drink our own broth, to which I have soon got accustomed. At midday we feed at Wagner's, where the cooking is very good; his wife thoroughly understands it, moreover is most friendly and obliging—for instance, the other afternoon, without a word of warning, she mended my umbrella—I ought to say *yours*, and apologise for having taken it, but this Zurich communism has made me a little hazy on the question of Mine and Thine"—so he informs his sister, whom he had left at

Ötlishausen. The tribute to Minna is characteristic; but Richard could be homely too: "I hear my two conductor-partners coming," he writes to Frau Ritter, October 13, "They have been working at the *Fille du Régiment*, and come to eat and drink. Hans hasn't had his things sent yet, and goes about demurely in Karl's garments." With a self-denial calling forth from Hans the exclamation (to his sister, Jan. '51), "He has behaved so finely, so nobly, so paternally to me, that I am bound to eternal gratitude"—Wagner went through the drudgery of superintending rehearsals even of works for which he had but little sympathy, merely to indoctrinate his gratis pupils in the secrets of his art. Some three months later we hear an echo of it, at the end of *Opera and Drama*, "The artist's joy is in imparting. . . . We are *elders* and *youngers:* let the elder not think of himself, but love the younger for sake of the bequest he sinks into his heart for fresh increasing" (*P.* II. 375).

Ritter not having proved presentable as yet, Hans was the first of Wagner's brace of pupils to make his bow to the public, leading off with that *Fille du Régiment* October the 14th. Though he cannot have been in training for more than two or three days, he won from the *Eidgenössische Zeitung* a prompt tribute to his talent as conductor; but there were grumblers, doubtless instigated by members of the orchestra, who had incontinently expected the master to keep the baton to himself. To silence these insatiables, Wagner published in the said journal the following explicit statement of a complex situation:—

An erroneous notion has been spread with respect to my position at the theatre here; a notion which I must correct, lest it become injurious to that institution.

Herr Kramer's offer to engage me as musical conductor at his theatre I was obliged to decline—for general, not particular, reasons; on the other hand, it was a pleasure to me to find Herr Kramer willing to entrust the musical direction to two young friends of mine, my immediate art-pupils. As I naturally had to back my recommendation so far as necessary to ensure the Director against a conceivable block in the affairs of his stage, arising from the inexperience of my young friends, I also assured Herr Kramer of my readiness to make myself as useful as my powers would permit—in the interest of Art.

At the very outset a case arose in which I hoped to make myself of use by personally conducting two operatic performances. Here I

was determined chiefly by sincere astonishment at the excellence of the singers Herr Kramer had been able to acquire for his theatre under the most difficult conditions, and a consequent desire to introduce this happy ensemble to the favour of the public as warmly as possible. Now that I may consider that desire fulfilled, I have only to pursue my other wish in the interest of local Opera, namely to train it good conductors; for I am not in a position myself to continue the conducting for any length of time. I have begged the artists to make it possible for me to take a sympathetic interest in their doings, should they so desire, by bestowing a trustful regard on the conductors I have recommended. To the friends of Opera in Zurich I can only address a like petition, that they will make it possible, by a similar regard, for me to take a share in the doings of an Opera so peculiarly well equipped; and in particular, that they will rely on my esteem for the artists and public being sufficient to prevent my leaving the immediate musical command to anyone as to whom I am not convinced that he is competent for his chosen task.

Accordingly the supposition that, whenever I do not happen to conduct in person, that particular opera has been thrown over by me, would be a fundamental error; to which I reply with the assurance that in the rehearsals held under my superintendence I watch over the work of the conductor also—and that in a twofold interest.

Zurich, October 17, 1850. RICHARD WAGNER.

Of course it was impossible for Wagner to transfer the whole of the public conducting to his pupils as yet, or rather to Hans von Bülow; so we have *Norma* conducted by the master on the 21st October, and *Der Freischütz* repeated by him on the 27th. Meanwhile Hans had conducted two more operas, *Czar und Zimmermann* and *Barbiere*, as well as a musical farce; by the first week in November he had added to these *Fra Diavolo:* with varying success. His alertness of ear and fertility of resource had never been at fault, for it was a case of the born conductor; but intrigues were already hatching in the company, the band itself, with a view to forcing Wagner's hand, to compelling him to take the whole burden on his shoulders.

Nov. 8 the master gave the Switzers *Don Giovanni*, on the preparation of which he had spent the most exacting toil. Let us hear Bülow's account of it, from a letter to his father next day: "All three of us had worked for several days and nights, correcting the most inaccurate of band-parts, replacing absent instruments by others—for instance, trombones by deep trumpets, and so on. Wagner had translated the Italian recitatives into good

racy German dialogue, excepting some which he admitted in the original form; further, he had simplified the scenery, reducing its irritating changes to a single one in the middle of each act, and transferred the aria of Donna Anna to the cemetery whither she repairs with Octavio—for whom he composed a brief recitative to lead up to Anna's aria. Thus the whole dramatic action gained a reasonable sequence, lacking, alas! in almost all performances. It revolted me to my soul, to think how people at Dresden used to allege that Wagner purposely conducted Mozart's operas badly, and could not bear this music in his self-conceit: such warm and living, such artistic and most rational piety towards Mozart, as was expressed in so unselfish an act, not one of those pseudo-adorers will ever display." And all this trouble for nothing but Kramer's scratch company! For we read in Letter 56 to Uhlig (Feb. '52), "I have not preserved my Don Juan arrangement"; and it is certain that the Zurich theatre has not preserved it either. In all probability Kramer bore it off with his luggage, and thus this unique revision may now be reposing in some lumber-store—another chance for the autograph-dealer.

November was a busy month for Wagner and his prentices. On the 11th the *Barbiere* was repeated by Bülow; then came *Masaniello* (Stumme von Portici) on the 15th; whilst Wagner repeated *Don Giovanni* Nov. 18. We hear of *Jean de Paris*, the *Deux Journées* and Méhul's *Joseph* being either rehearsed or performed, *Euryanthe* and *Figaro* contemplated, and Wagner conducting the *Magic Flute* on the 29th. A letter of Karl Ritter's * even speaks of its being proposed to give the *Flying Dutchman* by way of benefit for the prima donna, Frau Rauch-Wernau. Unfortunately that lady herself brought the whole edifice tumbling to the ground, so far as concerned Wagner and his two young friends. December 2, Hans writes his father: "On my coming home from rehearsal to-day something occurred that imperatively demands our, Wagner's and my, withdrawal from the theatre. To-night I conduct for the last time, in the *Stumme von Portici*. It is clean impossible to continue in this fashion. Things and persons are too disgusting; friction is never-ending. I can't go into the whole affair, but the

* November 24, to Wagner's niece Francisca, sister of Johanna and subsequently Karl's sister-in-law, then acting at Stettin.

main reason of our intending to give notice to-day is a quarrel with the husband of the prima donna, that lady having refused to sing any more to my conducting. She's such a favourite, that Kramer will be ruined if she goes away. So I must reconcile myself to becoming the scapegoat. No middle course is thinkable. And even if things were smoothed over—which could only be done by humbling myself and Wagner—it could not last; at the first opportunity a scandal would occur again, and the end would be the same. Therefore, preferably to-day, when we can beat a very honourable retreat, than to-morrow." The old, old tale of singers' tantrums, that had dogged Wagner's footsteps since the days of *Das Liebesverbot*. We may suspect, in addition, a little scheming on the Director's part, to force the master to throw his pupils over and take sole possession of the baton himself. A reckoning without the host; for Wagner conducted but one performance more, this winter, that of the *Dame blanche* Dec. 6.

A sudden end to Hans' apprenticeship. However, as the young man says, "The two months here have not been wasted; I have learnt something that may be of the greatest service to me." In an incredibly short time he had learnt from its unrivalled master the foundations of that art of conducting which was eventually to make him quite as famous as his pianoforte-playing, and famed where fame is harder still to gain. We have seen what his reluctant father thought of his progress a month or two later; to that we may add Hans' own words to his mother, of April 30, '51: "Of Wagner, whom you consider my depraver, you may think as you will; but musically I owe him much from Zurich. These practical exercises have enriched me much in knowledge and experience, brought me a long way forward on my career, and in any case have the material advantage of qualifying me for a bread-winner; for good conductors are not unnumbered, and the business of conductor guarantees my daily bread in the future. To learn this, no conditions could have been more favourable, i.e. better-suited (one learns more from a bad orchestra, than from a good one) than those at Zurich and St Gallen."

As luck would have it, the little theatre at St Gallen — not far from Hans' father's chateau—was then in need of a conductor. A fortnight later Hans von Bülow is installed there, with Karl Ritter for his Chorus-master; so he says goodbye to Wagner

for the present, save for a two-days visit from the latter next April, and an appearance of his own at a Zurich concert. After the St Gallen season he had meant to return to Zurich, to learn from Wagner to compose an opera*; but, partly owing to his mother's opposition, he goes to Liszt instead. As for the Zurich operatic season, it was tamely led to its appointed close under the local concert-conductor Franz Abt. Quite at its end, however, Wagner relented so far as to conduct two more performances—*Don Giovanni* on the 26th of March '51, and *Fidelio* on the 31st (the final night)—evidently having patched up the quarrel with Frau Rauch-Wernau.

At the beginning of March 1851 Wagner incidentally informs Liszt: "For the last six months I have been unable to earn anything beyond a small fee for conducting a couple of Beethoven's symphonies at the—wretched—concerts here." These were the subscription-concerts of the Zurich Allgemeine Musikgesellschaft, ordinarily presided over by the Franz Abt just-mentioned (a composer of solo and part songs that enjoyed considerable vogue not long ago). They need not detain us at present; in connection with those of a year hence we shall have an opportunity of returning to them. Their dates may as well be given here, however—Jan. 28, Feb. 25 and March 18—as evidence that our hero had by no means retired into his shell, though he refused to let his good-nature be imposed upon. Soon afterwards he writes to dear old Fischer: "I now am doing but the possible, and you'll see that something will come of it in the long run. . . . Just you wait: the ice shall yet break!"

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* In his last letter from Zurich to his father (Dec. 9, 1850) he alludes to this scheme: he very much wants to take "Christus" as a subject, evidently after reading his master's dramatic sketch, but "Wagner thinks I ought to choose something more practical for the moment." An echo of the Zurich intercourse may certainly be traced in a subsequent letter of Hans' to his father: "If it be possible, I shall finish the task for my doctorate before my first artistic tour. The theme is: History of the Belief in Immortality" (Oct. 25, '51)—cf. p. 20 *ant.* Ten days earlier, Hans had written his mother, "I am thinking also of my doctorate work, and hope to have it in order within a year. It will be a stout book, since the material is very copious and requires much reading of learned authors." As Liszt had only returned to Weimar three nights before, we can scarcely attribute to *him* the origination of an idea already developed so far.

There had already been signs of a breaking of the ice in more important centres, in course of the winter; the first, though transitory, symptoms of a wider thaw. Paris, evidently stimulated by the news of Weimar's energy, determined to come out with that overture the abandonment of which had been the last straw on the camel's back in the late "fool's errand" there. On the 18th of October, 1850, Liszt had written: "I have just received a letter from the director of the 'Union musicale,' Seghers, telling me that they are going to perform your Tannhäuser overture at the first concert of the society, on the 24th of November. You may rest assured of the industry and intelligence with which he will rehearse it." So far, so good. Nov. 25, Wagner himself writes Liszt, "I have lately had a letter from a friend in Paris [Anders?] who has been at several rehearsals of the Tannhäuser overture under Seghers: from what he tells me, I am perfectly satisfied not only that the performance will be got up well, but also that the audience will be guaranteed an understanding of it, through a programme which they have pieced together from your article on my opera. Nevertheless, I cannot help doubting that anything will come of it for me, in the very best event." Once more the author was a better prophet than his Paris-enamoured friend. The performance came off*; but Jan. 20, 1851, Wagner writes to Uhlig: "I should think that no one will quarrel with my foresight any longer: again have I had a lesson from Paris. Probably you have read the story of the Tannhäuser-overture affair there. Had I but done what I wanted to, when I heard they meant to perform it! I wanted to have the parts withdrawn at once, since I foresaw exactly what has happened! But —for that one gets called an obstinate, impossible fellow. So I've been paid out, and people are making merry over me to their hearts' content. If you want a joke, just read the feuilleton in the *National* about this concert.—Never mind,

* Under Seghers at the Société Sainte Cécile—possibly a new name for the Union Musicale. Liszt writes to Raff, from Eilsen, Jan. 6, 1851: "Belloni, who had seen *Tannhäuser* at Weymar, quite naïvely tells me: 'Mais M. Liszt, ce n'était plus du tout la même chose à Paris. A Weymar l'ouverture m'a fait grand plaisir, et à Paris cela m'a ennuyé.' And reflect that 24 first violins, 20 second, 12 contrabassi etc., are employed there!" (*Die Musik*, Feb. 1902). Surely Liszt is confusing the resources of this Société with those of the Conservatoire, to which he alludes in the sentence before.

Paris after all is quite indifferent to me,—and that makes good the damage."

Would he fare any better in Brussels? There was a question of it at the time. Wagner himself was none too optimistic on the point, for the above reflections are tacked on to the news that he has had an offer from the Belgian capital for *Lohengrin*. However fugitively, the surface was rippling in response to the stone cast into the pond by Liszt; Dec. 27, '50, Wagner informs his Weimar champion, "I have just received a letter from *Brussels*, on behalf of the management of the Royal theatre there. In consequence of the brilliant success my opera *Lohengrin* has lately reaped—those are their words—and considering that the subject of that opera belongs to Belgian history, they propose to have the work translated into good French—if that be possible—and produced with all speed at the Royal theatre. Consequently they want me to send them a copy of the score and textbook with all despatch." Liszt is not nearly so much in love with Brussels as with Paris, but advises Wagner to accept, on the "conditio sine qua non" that he (Wagner) himself shall revise the translation and supervise the dress-rehearsals. But, although the Belgian folk had been so pressing—Charles Hanssens Jun. was conductor at the Opera and moving spirit in this short-lived scheme—we hear no more of the proposal till July '51, with a letter from Liszt to Philipront, director of the Brussels theatre. From that time forth, dead silence. Wagner was right when he said, "I certainly have no illusions about Brussels" (Feb. 18, '51): the first performance of *Lohengrin* there took place just about twenty years later, namely in March 1870!

The ice was hard to break in France and Belgium; yet little Weimar and little Zurich had really started a general, though very gradual thaw.

III.

"OPERA AND DRAMA."

Proposed periodical "For Art and Life"; "Art and Climate"; embryo of "Life of the Future."—"Judaism in Music."—History and general range of "Opera and Drama."—Death of a domestic pet.—Search for a publisher.—"A Theatre at Zurich."—Letter to Liszt "On the Goethe-foundation."—Theodor Uhlig's visit.—"A Communication to my Friends."

DEAR READER,

This will be a lengthy chapter, and perhaps not the easiest to digest. Should you therefore elect to skip it, however, I earnestly beg you to return to it at an hour of greater leisure; for a knowledge of Richard Wagner's main artistic principles is essential to a proper estimate of his life-work.

W. A. E

AFTER completion of *The Art-work of the Future* (November 1849) Wagner writes Uhlig, "This will have been my last literary work"; but no sooner have the words left his pen than he adds a postscript, "If it were possible to start a journal, perhaps under the title '*For Art and Life*,' I would gladly contribute much to it, to help propagate the new principle on all sides." A month later he tells the same fidus Achates: "After finishing that work I was so determined to do no more writing of the kind, that I can't help laughing at myself to-day; on every hand I feel the necessity bursting out of me, to write again. . . . To those before whom I set my 'Art-work of the Future' I have still a vast amount to say."

Just as teaching is proverbially the better mode of learning,

there were hundreds of points which the dramatist and thinker was burning to make clear to himself—as well as to his readers; and this hint of a periodical "For Art *and Life*" will account for much that found its way, at the first glance inexplicably, into the Second Part of *Opera and Drama*. The hint is repeated in that second letter (Dec. 27, 49): "My wish would be that a sheet [16 pages] should appear every week, or two to three a fortnight. Each such issue would have to contain a full cannon-charge, to be fired against some rotten tower; that down, another would be aimed at, and so on. The cannonade would last exactly as long as we had ammunition. That would do some good, and were I in Germany, I could work such flying broadsheets all alone. Perhaps it might even be possible from abroad." This was just before the expedition to Paris, where he meant to make the ordinary papers ring, if possible; his only fear being, lest everything should come "too late," i.e. lest political reaction should have set too strongly in, before he could rouse men's minds to the necessity of taking time by the forelock and remodelling society on a plan to give more breathing-space to art, to permit of its becoming an uplifting factor in the lives of *all*.

One such article, on *Art and Climate*, he actually despatched from Paris to Kolatschek's *Deutsche Monatsschrift*. A pendant to *Art and Revolution*, its key-note is to be found in the following sentence: "The creative faculty has ever resided in Man's *non-dependence on Nature*, not in any directly productive influence of *Climate*. . . . When men shall once more fashion artworks from pure Need [*i.e.* love] of Art, and not as now from Luxury and Caprice, no climate upon earth can hinder them from Art-work; on the contrary, the niggardness of outer Nature will whet the more their purely human zeal for Art. . . . The most burning need of the present generation is that of Universal Human Love; and we can but look with full assurance to a future element of life in which this Love must needs give birth to works undreamt as yet, works that shall turn those scraps and leavings of Greek art to unregarded toys for fractious children" (*P.* I. 255, 262, 264). But Kolatschek's magazine, though "Art and Life" are blazoned on its programme too, is not precisely what our author yearns for; "looked at closer, even it has too much 'politics' and other formalisms, German 'patriotism' and similar

platitudes the meaning of which we know too well." So, in the act of planning out his *Art and Climate*, he writes from Paris, "I'm resolved to issue 'Leaves for Art and Life' on my own sole account—perhaps half-monthly. Should the Art-work of the Future cause a little stir, I hope to win over Wigand for my undertaking" (to Uhlig, Feb. 8, 1850).

Nevertheless, we hear no more of this contemplated magazine: the dislocation ensuing on his abortive descent upon Paris would naturally thrust the idea into the background awhile, till it got swallowed up in other projects. Nor was it the only literary scheme abandoned; for, just as with his dramatic embryos of a year to two years back, his brain was literally teeming with ideas that jostled one another for precedence. Thus we have already heard of a missing link between *Art and Revolution* and *The Art-work of the Future*, namely "The Artist-hood of the Future," numerous jottings for which are contained in the Posthumous Papers: its main substance, however, has manifestly been incorporated in *The Art-work* itself. Another work, "a book to cover the whole ground," to be called "The Redemption of Genius," had been contemplated as a sequel to *The Art-work;* also two smaller essays on "The Monumental" and "The Ugliness of Civilisation, with the conditions of the Beautiful as based on the Life of the Future"—all three in the early summer of 1850 (see Letter 14 to Uhlig). Here again we may reconstruct the skeleton ourselves from limb-bones that have found their way into other treatises of this Zurich period, in particular the *Communication.* Finally we hear of a scheme that haunted our author for weeks, in connection with that "new principle" for the establishment of which he was looking to a universal "Revolution." Karl Ritter is our authority for this, in that letter to Francisca Wagner (Nov. 24, 50): "Your uncle is now writing a book on 'The Essence of Opera,' which will perhaps be plainer to the average intelligence than 'The Art-work of the Future.' Next summer he will pretty certainly compose Siegfried; then will come two comic operas—founded on folk-tales—and when he has done with writing operas, he will take in hand his

Life of the Future

many bits of which he has communicated to me on our walks, a work that surpasses *everything.*"

Of all these unexecuted schemes, it is that sibylline "Life of

the Future" which most excites our curiosity. There are various tantalising hints of it in Wagner's published writings: for instance in *State and Religion* (1864-5), where he tells King Ludwig of his former cogitations, "I found that, when equally divided among all, actual *labour* with its crippling burthen and fatigue would be absolutely done away with, leaving nothing in its stead but an *occupation*, which of itself must necessarily assume an artistic character. A clue to the character of this Occupation, as substitute for actual Labour, was offered me by Husbandry among other things.* This, when plied by every member of the commune, I conceived as partly developed into more productive tillage of the Garden, partly into joint observances for times and seasons of the day and year, taking the character of strengthening exercises, ay, of pastimes and festivities" (*P.* IV. 7-8). A good memory, indeed, was Wagner's; for, upon consulting Letter 18 to Uhlig—written at the very time referred-to by Karl Ritter (Oct. 22, 50)—we find these words: "Want of sound nourishment on the one hand, excess of rank enjoyment on the other, but above all a mode of life quite contrary to Nature, have brought us to a state of degeneracy which can be remedied only by a total renovation of our crippled organism. Superfluity and privation: these are the two destroying enemies of present-day mankind. . . . All we who live in a town are condemned to the most cheerless self-murder. How is it, then, with the dwellers in our villages? Excessive work corrupts men here as much as in the cities. . . . Whithersoever we look in the civilised world, we observe man's degeneration from the causes here assigned. We have no right to despair of the world, however, unless we regard those *causes* as eternal necessities. . . . Let us not forget that *culture* alone can enable us so to enjoy as man in his highest fulness can enjoy." The Posthumous Papers of about this date supply us with further hints, all pointing in the same direction, such as the laconic jotting "Town—and Country," and again (under the heading "The Genius of Communism") "Constant intercourse of the country-people with nature, the soil and its natural attributes: alternation of the

* "If someone would make me a present of a peasant-holding, I'd become a simple homespun *man*, and certainly write no more art-essays" (to Uhlig, March 10, 1851). Those few days on the Weimar crown-lands in 1849, at Oekonomierath Wernsdorf's, may have given the writer some food for thought.

seasons—our-old festivals: celebration of spring, of vintage and so on, easter-sports: natural mirthfulness." But, as Wagner continues his confession to King Ludwig, "While trying to work out all the bearings of this transformation of one-sided labour into a more universal Occupation, I became conscious that I was meditating nothing so intensely new, but merely pursuing problems akin to those which so earnestly had occupied our greatest poets themselves, as we may see in *Wilhelm Meister's Wanderjahre*." That may have been one of the reasons why the "Life of the Future" was never committed to paper; another, most decidedly, was that the completion of his great treatise on Opera and Drama revived his ardour to get back to Art, leaving the Future to shape its Life for itself.

Before we quite dismiss this never-written book, we have yet to note another hint, which almost indicates that germs from it have found perpetuation in Part II. of *Opera and Drama* itself (caps. 3 and 4), written but two or three weeks later than Karl Ritter's letter. To the third of those extracts from the latter work which Wagner published in the *Deutsche Monatsschrift* as separate articles, by way of anticipation, he added a footnote: "The accompanying third fragment of a larger work—in which he is already addressing himself to the life-conditions of the Drama of the Future—the author adds because he has therein endeavoured to shew those life-conditions in their development from the needs of our modern situation"; those "life-conditions" consisting mainly in the "foundering of the State, and rise of an organically healthy Society" (*P.* II. 201). In fact the next page of *Opera and Drama*, so enigmatic in its present position, might very well have figured as an introduction to the cryptic work: "We are not in a position so much as to conceive the exhaustless multiplicity of relations of animated individualities to one another in the Future, its endless fill of constantly new forms; for until now all man's relations are governed by historic Rights and pre-ordained by statutory Norm. But we may dimly guess their boundless wealth, if we figure them as purely Human, ever fully and entirely Present; i.e., if we think of them as stripped of every extrahuman and non-present thing, such as Property and historic Right, that in the State has wedged itself between them, rent their bonds of love, disindividualised, Class-uniformed, and State-established them." Some sort of communism, then, with the

greatest freedom for the individual,* was to have been the basis of this "Life of the Future." In Letter 14 to Uhlig we find it expressed thus: "So soon as one knows oneself allied with others, one becomes more determinate, more peaceful and free, than when left entirely to one's single choice. . . . I am not proud of my isolation, and with all my heart could wish to be merged in a million of people of like experience and need." Again in December 1850, "I sincerely believe I can approach to *doing* something only by making comrades for myself, with whom to arrive at true art; at which the solitary man, quite certainly, can never come." In this form we may remember the idea not only in *The Art-work of the Future*, but practically embodied in the earlier longing to get Schumann, Mendelssohn et al., to share his artistic views and aims. Still better is it expressed in that jotting in the Posthumous Papers which crops up among notes decidedly intended for *Opera and Drama*, yet constitutes a link between the projected "Redemption of Genius" and this other sibylline roll a few ashes from which we have been trying to restore: "In the most favourable event the whole reward of genius in advance of its times could only exist in the exaltation of egoism—deification. We deify and worship naught save what is unintelligible to us: what we fully understand we love, declare to be a part of us, our equal. This will be the reward of the individual genius of the future" (*P.* VIII. 372).† Best of all, however, is the symbolic form in which this "Life of the Future" is pictured in the opening scene of *Wieland der Schmiedt* (early 1850). Here we have the artist Wayland and his two brothers, the archer and medicine-man; the artist fashions and invents out of sheer love for his brothers, whilst they display their gratitude by rendering him loving service according to their craft. An idyllic communism, set before us as the natural and original state. It is shattered by the greed and violence of the representative of the political State,

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* "The necessity common to every member of Society, namely of the Individual's own free self-determining" (*Opera and Drama* p. 194)—a case in point, young Bülow.

† In explanation of the term "the individual genius" we may refer to a sentence in that page or two of the *Communication* where we obviously meet with a fragment from the projected *Redemption of Genius:* "In the times when Speech, and Myth, and Art, were really born, the thing we call Genius was unknown: no one man was a genius, since all men were it" (*P.* I. 289).

King Neiding; but the drama closes with the destruction of Neiding and his minions, the restoration of the reign of Love.

And now for the literary works of this period that actually came to birth.

Wagner's return to Zurich, and definite settling down there, had taken place in the first week of July 1850. Mid-August, in the thick of correspondence upon the forthcoming production of *Lohengrin*, he fulminates an article, or rather, essay, which has won him more enemies than any other thing he said or did; an essay whose bare title has since made thick the ink of hundreds of critics, and poisoned the livers of scores of directors: *Judaism in Music*. Through an uncritical assimilation of two false dates—taking for gospel the printer's error "1852" on a title-page in the *Ges. Schr.*, and combining it with Frau Wille's erroneous "1852" as the year of Wagner's first acquaintance with the Frankfort sage's system—Friedrich Nietzsche has foolishly attributed this essay, together with its author's whole dislike of the Jews, to the influence of Schopenhauer! That philosopher can have had nothing whatever to do with it, for he did not dawn on Wagner's mental horizon until four years later. Nowadays, on the Continent at least, it would be unnecessary to go so far afield in search of a possible incentive; but half a century ago there was no such thing as an Anti-Semite movement—the Jews of Germany, in fact, had only just been freed from certain civic disqualifications. No: the dislike was something bred in Wagner's bones, but only gradually coming to full consciousness. Here there was an artistic, a racial, and a personal antagonism at work. Yet that might not have sufficed to make him suddenly uplift his voice at so critical a juncture, had it not been that he found even well-disposed persons confounding his artistic aims and manfully Teutonic works with the decadent products of the most astute exploiter of a vitiated public taste. "I cannot exist as artist before myself and friends," he explains to Liszt next April, "without being conscious of my complete antithesis to Meyerbeer, and avowing it aloud. To this step I am driven with absolute despair, when I meet among my friends again the notion that I have anything at all in common with him. To none of my friends can I present myself as what I am, with what I will and feel, except I detach myself

entirely from that haze in which I still wrongly appear to so many."*

A disavowal on the broader scale was already looming before his mind as one of his most urgent literary necessities; in his contemplated exposure of the rottenness of Modern Opera he was firmly resolved to be restrained by no personal considerations affecting either himself or others. But there was one aspect of the matter that could find no place within the frame of an æsthetic treatise, a side-issue involving a deeper problem of Race and Culture. All his childhood and youth, and again in his seven years of manhood's toil at Dresden, he had had the spectacle of the lower class of Jews continually beneath his nose. Instinctively he loathed the type; as time wore on, he naturally would come to ask himself the reason. No doubt it was lamentably inconsistent, that a man who was preaching *universal* love for all mankind, should cherish hate for one particular variety; but Blood will have its way, whatever Brain may advance to the contrary. The lower-class Jew had disgusted him; the upper-class, or "artist" Jew had repelled him, in every sense of the term: the *Prophète* completed the process. The whole catalogue of artistic offences, which he believed he had discovered in all Jewish attempts at Culture, he found contained in this one medley. Since his departure, it had invaded Dresden; and the very theatre that had rejected so ideal and thoroughbred a work as *Lohengrin*, was bowing the knee to this musical Baal. Uhlig had penned an adverse criticism on this "false Prophet" (*Neue Zeitschrift*, April 23, 1850), making use of the expression "Hebraic art-taste." That became the signal for a general fluttering in the dovecot of the Meyerbeerians, and at last our hero could hold his tongue no longer. "I long had nursed a secret grudge against this Judaism, and that grudge is as necessary to my nature as gall to the blood. An occasion came, when their cursed scribbling vexed me more than usual, and I suddenly let fling." This is how he describes to Liszt, next Spring, the origin of that explosion which every dictate of prudence would have enjoined him to repress at a moment when Liszt was bidding for his wider popularity with the *Lohengrin* production.

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* See also page 98 *infra*.

Before we go into the actual history and immediate consequences of the peccant article, we must devote a few lines to its contents. From the tone in which it has so often been discussed, or rather, abused, one might expect to find in it the most rabid of personal attacks on Meyerbeer and Mendelssohn. It happens to contain nothing of the kind. The title it is, that has sufficed for most opponents: in that abides the ineradicable sting. Uhlig's "Hebraic art-taste" was almost a compliment, compared with "*Judaism* in Music"—"*Das Judenthum in der Musik*." And the generalisations by which Wagner seeks to account for "the involuntary repellence possessed for us by the nature and personality of the Jew" throw only too lurid a light on that title: he has home-truths to utter, the bald statement whereof must necessarily wound. "When we strove for emancipation of the Jews, we virtually were more the champions of an abstract principle, than of a concrete case. . . . To our astonishment we now perceive that in our Liberal battle we were floating in the air and fighting clouds, while the whole fair soil of actuality has found an appropriator whom our aerial flights have very much amused, but who holds us far too silly to reward us by relaxing one iota of his usurpation of that material soil. Rather is it *we* who are shifted into the necessity of fighting for emancipation from the Jews. According to the present constitution of this world, the Jew in truth is more than emancipate already: he rules, and will rule so long as Money remains the power before which all our doings and our dealings lose their force." Then, "In ordinary life the Jew strikes us primarily by his outward appearance; which, no matter to what European nationality we belong, has something disagreeably foreign to that nationality. . . . By far more weighty, nay, of quite decisive weight for our inquiry, is the effect the Jew produces on us through his *speech*. The Jew speaks the language of the nation in whose midst he has dwelt from generation to generation, but always speaks it as an alien." Presently we have a blunt description of the "snuffle" that mars the voice-sounds of the lower-class Jew—very unpleasant reading for Meyerbeer & Co., but not more unpleasant than would be a reminder to the "cultured" Londoner of the Cockney twang.

Other peculiarities of the race are unflatteringly noted. Yet these are no stabs from mere devilry or spite. There is an

earnest object in it all. A nation's Art, according to Wagner, being founded on the characteristics of its "Folk," we must seek among the lower classes for features worthy of artistic reproduction, above all for the spontaneous accents of its voice in Passion*:

"The true poet, no matter in what branch of art, still gains his stimulus from nothing but a faithful, loving contemplation of instinctive life, that life which only greets his sight among the Folk. Now, where is the cultured Jew to find this Folk? . . . The cultured Jew has taken untold pains to strip off all the obvious tokens of his lower co-religionists." With what success? "It has conducted only to his total isolation. . . . Alien and apathetic stands the educated Jew amid a society he does not understand, with whose tastes and aspirations he does not sympathise, whose history and evolution have always been indifferent to him."

Take Poetry: "A language, its expression and development, is not the work of individuals, but of an historic community: only he who has unconsciously grown up within that bond, takes also any share in its creations." And Music, that pre-eminently Occidental art—how should a Semite feel at home in that for which his antecedents had no parallel? "He merely listens to the barest surface of our art, not to its life-bestowing inner organism. . . . The Jew musician hurls together the forms and styles of every age and every master."

After the ground has thus been cleared in more or less general fashion, the two most eminent Jewish composers are summarily dealt with. But it is rather the reflection from what has gone before, than any directly personal application, that could be viewed as a slur on them *as men*. Mendelssohn indeed, the dead member of the pair, is treated almost with affection so far as concerns his private character and natural gifts, though he is denied any "purely human" power in his works: "Only where an op-

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* The beauty and profundity of the opening and closing sentences of the following passage will demonstrate the spirit in which this essay was conceived:—"Inner agitation, genuine passion, each finds its own peculiar language at the instant when, struggling for an understanding, it girds itself to utterance. The Jew has no true Passion, and least of all a passion that might thrust him on to art-creation. But where this passion is not forthcoming, there neither is any calm: true, noble Calm is nothing else than the after-taste of true and noble passion satisfied" (*P.* III. 92-3).

pressive sense of this incapacity appears to invade the composer's mind, and drive him to express a soft and mournful resignation, has Mendelssohn the power to shew himself characteristic—characteristic in the sense of a finely-tempered individuality that confesses an impossibility in view of its own powerlessness." But "a like sympathy can be extended to no other Jewish composer."

That naturally brings the essayist to Meyerbeer. Of his private character, or semi-private relations, not a word is breathed; but as opera-composer he is accused of "exploiting the confusion of taste in a section of our musical public. . . . There is no object in designating more closely the artistic means he expends on attainment of this aim: suffice it that, as we perceive by the result, he knows completely how to dupe; and more particularly by taking that jargon we have already characterised, and palming it upon his ennuyed audience as the modern-piquant dress for all the trivialities which so often had been set before it in all their natural fatuity." And so on, for about a page and a half.—It should be mentioned that Meyerbeer is nowhere actually *named*. Yet that makes little difference: there was no possibility of mistaking his identity. And though the composer of the *Prophète* may even have chuckled at the tribute to his shrewdness, he can scarcely have stayed indifferent to the Parthian dart that hits him at the finish: "He, too, appears to us wellnigh in a tragic light: yet the purely personal element of threatened vested-interest turns the thing into a tragi-comedy; just as, for that matter, the unappealing, the truly ludicrous, is the characteristic mark whereby this famed composer shews his Jewhood in his music."

To complete a trio, a few words are devoted in conclusion to Hebrew-German poetry, as exemplified by Heinrich Heine. "We certainly know of no poetising Jew at the time when Goethe and Schiller were singing to us: at the time when our romancing became a lie, however, and no true poet could spring from our utterly unpoetic life, then was it the office of an uncommonly gifted poet-Jew to bare that lie with fascinating taunts. . . . His famous musical congeners, too, he mercilessly lashed for their pretence to pass as artists," and so on.—Very ungrateful, some folk may say, since Wagner had once obtained this Heine's permission to borrow a plot for his *Flying Dutchman*. Yet is not Heine's version of that subject made itself "a lie," i.e. a mockery, by a running

commentary conceived in the spirit of the last verse of his still more famous *Loreley?* *

Enough—to indicate the gist of this notorious *Judaism in Music.* The reader who does not agree with its broader contention, will certainly not desire to be assailed with minor details. For ourselves, ere passing to the missile's outward history, we may rest content with one final quotation, taken from the exordium: "What the heroes of the arts, with untold strain consuming life and lief, had wrested from the incubus of two millennia of misery, to-day the Jew converts into an art-bazaar. Who sees it in the mannered gimcrack, that it is glued together by the hallowed brow-sweat of the genius of two-thousand years?" (*P.* III. 82).

With a covering letter dated August 24, 1850,† Wagner sent the manuscript to Karl Ritter, who, as we already know, had gone to Weimar for the *Lohengrin* production. It must have been the very day of the said production that Ritter received it and transferred it to Uhlig, at the author's request, for despatch to Brendel, editor of the *Neue Zeitschrift.* As to the pseudonym "K. Freigedank"—i.e. K. Freethought—the covering letter says: "That everyone will guess 'tis me, doesn't matter. Through the fictitious name I shall obviate a useless scandal, which would be purposely raised if I signed it with my own. Should the Jews come by the *unlucky* idea of making it a personal squabble, it would turn out very badly for them; for I haven't the smallest fear, even were Meyerbeer to get me taxed with his former favours to me, which in that event I should reduce to their true value. But, as said, I have no wish to bring about that scandal." It is almost a pity the provocation was not directly forthcoming, for a public statement of the value of Meyerbeer's "favours" would have cut the ground from under many a purblind critic in the times to come; but the mere fact that Wagner was fully prepared to dispose of any charge of ingratitude towards that quarter may be deemed sufficient.

Within a week of the *Lohengrin* production — an absolute challenge to Providence—the article appeared in two successive numbers of the *Zeitschrift*, Sept. 2 and 6. The immediate consequence was a veritable hailstorm of invectives, as might have been expected, indeed as Wagner did expect: "It seems to have

* See Appendix. ∀ ∀ ∀

† Letter 13 in the Uhlig series.

struck terror," he writes to Liszt next Spring, "and all I wanted was to give them such a fright. That they will retain the mastership, is just as certain as that it is not our princes, but the bankers and philistines, who rule us nowadays." Upon the article's reissue (with additions) in 1869, in pamphlet form *with* Wagner's signature, the Israelitish press endeavoured to make out that no notice had been paid it at the time; but, unfortunately for all arguments based on that assumption, Brendel himself supplies contemporary evidence to the contrary. In July 1851 he furnished his journal with a leader in which occurs this passage: "As that article had called up a perfect tempest, had given rise to now friendly, now hostile notices in a crowd of other papers, and finally had occasioned the sending to me of many expectorations of divers tendencies, intended for these columns, I held it wisest to let the matter rest awhile, to give the heated passions time to cool. Only to one voice representing the opposite view did I think it my duty to give space, but laid aside all other manuscripts received by me, including a tolerably lengthy article from London [? by F. Praeger] and a brief rejoinder by Herr Freigedank himself. It was not my object to smother the question; I only wished, as said, for calm discussion, not the voice of passion." Despite his regret that "a few harsh expressions" had not been omitted, Brendel's own sympathy with Wagner's views is amply proved by his allowing such a firebrand to scorch his paper, and that in a city where neo-Judaism had become a positive fetish; but he goes farther than mere sympathy. The following shews us with what insight he had penetrated to the very core of his contributor's contentions: "The Jews desire our Culture as a ready-made result, without having gone through the inner labour, the giant struggles, of the German spirit. They look upon this Culture as a thing one may take possession of in ease and comfort, without perceiving that it all is only to be bought by 'sweat, anguish, and the full cup of suffering and sorrow.' This is the chief offence of the cultured Jew, and upon this view is based the main idea of Freigedank's whole essay." And Brendel bravely bore the brunt of the encounter, with a staunchness that Wagner never forgot; so high, indeed, did the storm of passion rise, that his civic existence was acutely menaced. Brendel was a professor of musical history at the Leipzig Conservatorium — of Mendelssohnian memory: for daring to publish a word against the sacrosanct he

was requested to resign his post, in a memorial signed by *all* his colleagues, namely Rietz, Becker, Böhme, David, Hauptmann, Hermann, Joachim, Klengel, Moscheles, Plaidy and Wenzel. He stuck to his guns, however, and doggedly remained—*without* divulging the arch-offender's name.

In the passage quoted above from Brendel's leader, incidental reference is made to "a brief rejoinder by Herr Freigedank himself." We cannot say exactly how soon after the original article and the pro-Jew reply this submerged "rejoinder" was actually despatched, but we have an anticipatory hint of it in a letter to Uhlig dated Oct. 22, 1850: "I have not yet seen the replies to which you allude. In any case I have no inclination to engage in much bandying of words on that point: on the contrary, I have a damned short answer ready—and that from the New Testament, which I pretty well know by heart." On neither side, in fact, was there much desire to push the battle openly home, after the first alarm had died through all its echoes. Wagner had said his say, and there were other things for him to turn his mind to: the "higher Jewry," on the other hand, so soon as it had scented out his authorship, had no particular wish to give him free advertisement by ventilating a topic so distasteful to it—it had other, stealthier weapons at command; his acknowledged writings could be adversely reviewed or mocked at, a cordon drawn against his operas, his reviving fame snuffed out.

Enough of "Judaism." Important as were its effects on Wagner's future, and lasting his convictions on the point, it had been a mere episode in his literary career. For his art there were deeper problems still to broach. The whole essence and reason of existence of one of the firmest-established art-forms, that of Opera, was to be submitted to the most searching scrutiny in this strenuous winter 1850-51. Four months of wellnigh unremitting toil were to see the longest and most comprehensive of all his writings grow from an intended discussion of the "Essence of Opera" into a three-volume treatise on "Opera and Drama." The question of this art-form's right to existence long had exercised his mind. At the beginning of 1847 we saw him arrived already at the stage of considering his then unfinished *Lohengrin* "an experiment if Opera be possible." In the interval his mind has roamed through every height and depth of Life and Art, and he returns once more, with riper knowledge, to the vexing ques-

tion. But the final incentive to take it seriously in hand, from the speculative standpoint, came from almost an accident, namely the perusal of an article on "Modern Opera" in Brockhaus' *Gegenwart*—a sort of periodic supplement to the well-known *Conversationslexikon*. The writer of that article was W. H. Riehl, * of whom we shall hear again some years hereafter; for the present we need merely state that he was at this time a pushing young journalist just ten years Wagner's junior, but personally unknown to him. Excellent as a piece of clever, readable journalism, perhaps good enough to figure in the average Encyclopædia, the article has no depth whatever in it; neutral is its tone, and, when it comes to living composers, equivocal its verdict. It was probably the reference to himself that brought it under Wagner's notice, and led to his announcement to Uhlig, September 20, "I shall presently send you a longish article on Modern Opera—with Rossini and Meyerbeer"; for here he is once more bracketed with Meyerbeer:—"Germany possesses one master who has perceived what a great future is promised to Opera through the works of Meyerbeer: we mean Richard Wagner. The inner contradictoriness of Meyerbeer's conglomerate style, its dalliance with the Paris public's frivolous pursuit of pleasure, Wagner has well recognised; and his great tone-poems offer striking evidence that he has found in Beethoven a much greater master of neoromanticism than Meyerbeer found in Auber and Rossini." There you have a choice specimen of the Higher musical Criticism as practised by the bumptious tyro to this day. Meyerbeer's great achievement, however, according to this dashing young blood, is what he terms "Emancipation of the Masses," orchestral and choral, and "advance from Romantic to Historic Opera"; so that the "neoromantic" Beethoven is promptly dropped, without so much as a farewell, and "Richard Wagner has sought to adapt to the German spirit Meyerbeer's great achievement in its full extension. Only, his genius is still not clarified within; he, too, is still involved in inner contradictions, albeit contradictions of quite another sort than those we met in Meyerbeer; still does he lack that clear sense of proportion which enables Meyerbeer to range and govern even the most gigantic masses." From all

* According to the belief of Herr F. A. Brockhaus, one of the present representatives of the firm.

which it is evident that the writer, though glibly talking of Wagner's "operas" in the plural, had no personal knowledge of any save *Rienzi*. Sense of proportion—"Architectonik," as Riehl calls it—is scarcely the attribute in which an actual auditor of *Tannhäuser* or *Lohengrin* could possibly have rated them below the *Huguenots* or the *Prophète*. In what respect, then, is Wagner classed with Meyerbeer? Evidently as a disciple of the "Historic" school, i.e. as author of *Rienzi;* for the flashy article closes with these words, "The first great task will be to take Historic Opera, as begun by Meyerbeer, to purify and consciously mature it; and that task will either be accomplished by a German master, or stay unsolved for ever."*

Here was twofold cause for Wagner's intervention. The old spectre of his kinship to Meyerbeer must be laid for good, the hope of rescue through *Historic* Opera proved illusory. More than that. It was exasperating to find a writer who had got so far as to apologise for "virile minds that could not look into the inner artistic connection of the thing, if they have condemned Opera in general as a decadent art-form, and an art-form leading the nation itself to decadence"; a writer who could surmise that "the new French maxim, which forgets melody for sake of dramatic expression, has already laid the first foundations of a new school of singing, for which we might forecast a great future: Opera is becoming a musically-recited Play. To us there seems to be an inner nature-necessity dictating that the whole body of Opera shall follow this transformation into the musically-recited Play. Every sign is pointing in that direction"; it was exasperating to find a writer who almost puts his finger on the plague-spot—with the remark that, "for his texts the German master is abandoned to the wavering attempts of middling poets"—finally shutting his eyes to the plain conclusion, namely that it is to the Poet that one must look for the future of musical Drama.

This exasperating blindness of the "able and experienced art-critic," as Wagner dubs him in all good faith, is dealt with in the

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* The whole of Riehl's long article will be found translated in *The Meister* of 1895. As a general survey of the operatic composers in vogue just half a century ago, it is extremely interesting:—Verdi, for instance, though barely five months Wagner's junior, is dismissed with a word or two, as having scarcely risen above the general horizon.

Introduction to what was soon to blossom into *Opera and Drama*. The cause of that blindness? "The Critic," the man who prates about an art he cannot practise, "does not feel within himself that imperious necessity which drives the Artist to cry out: *So is it, and not otherwise!* . . . If the Critic recognises his *proper* position towards the world of art, he feels committed to that timid caution which bids him merely range his objects side by side and hand them over to the next inquirer, but never dare speak out with fervid certainty the final word. . . . This Criticism lives on 'though' and 'but'; for dear life's sake it clings to the merest surface, wags its head, and lo! the unmanly coward 'Ne'ertheless' springs forth, the possibility of endless criticism and indecision is won anew." So the Artist must himself take up the tale, and tell the world the plain unvarnished truth about his art, the truth that none save those *inside* can ever come at, the secret of that "error whereon the noblest geniuses had spent their whole artistic life-force, exploring all the windings of its maze with never an exit found" (*P.* II. 12).

Thus opens the Introduction to *Opera and Drama*, and at once we see that it is going to be much more than a mere tilt at Meyerbeer and Rossini. In fact some three weeks after the whole MS. has been fair-copied, we have the instruction to Uhlig: "Strike out a whole passage from the first page of the Introduction. I wrote that introduction when I still fancied the thing would become a series of articles for a musical journal: now, as the opening of a bulky book, such a tone would give the reader an impression of pettishness, if not of downright pettiness. It would be too terrible, if the book came to be regarded as a mere attack on Meyerbeer. I wish I could still withdraw much of this kind. When I read it myself, the taunts do not sound venomous —when others read it, perhaps I shall often seem to them a passionate and embittered person; which is about the last thing I should care to appear as, even to my enemies." What may have been the contents of that passage, we can only guess, but its omission would be in thorough keeping with a statement in the Preface (dated January '51): "Many, even among my well-wishers, will fail to comprehend how I could venture so ruthlessly to attack a personage renowned in our present world of Opera-composers; a calling in which I also am involved, and thus exposed to the suspicion of unbridled envy. I will not deny that

I had many a wrestle with myself before I decided on doing, and doing thus, what I have done. After writing out, I quietly read over all that was contained in this attack, every turn of phrase and each expression, and minutely pondered whether I should hand it thus to publicity; till at last I convinced myself that—with my emphatic views upon the weighty subject of discussion—I should only be a coward and unworthily concerned for self, did I not utter my opinions of that most dazzling phenomenon in the world of modern operatic composition exactly as I have done" (*P.* II. 8-9).* That is manly, and entirely disposes of any possible suggestion that *Judaism in Music* was issued pseudonymously for fear of Meyerbeer. But the omitted passage, whatever it may have been, probably carried too strong a spicing of journalistic polemics, and Wagner was far too great an artist not to perceive that the style for a serious *volume* on æsthetics must be a good deal more impersonal than that for a mere volley of feuilletons.

The growth of Wagner's literary summum opus from a contemplated article on Meyerbeer and Rossini, first into what now forms its opening third, "The Essence of Opera," or "Opera and the nature of Music," and finally into the tripartite *Opera and Drama*, is only to be compared with that of the *Ring des Nibelungen* from out the original *Siegfried's Tod*. An analogy by no means void of import, for it accentuates the vast expansion now taking place in all their author's plans. Within a few months of the completion of this monumental treatise he has devised his scheme for converting *Siegfried's Tod* itself into a trilogy, and further conceived the ambitious idea of presenting it to the world in a mode requiring a special theatre and sedulously-trained

* See also page 88 *supra*. There is an exactly parallel passage in an open letter of Liszt's to George Sand, published in the *Gazette Musicale* of 1837. Reviewing the scandal caused in Paris by his printed attack on a "rival musician," Liszt refers to his astonishment that "such empty, mediocre compositions should have made so great an effect," and justifies himself as follows: "I believed it permissible to say without reserve that, if this were the new school, I did not belong to the new school; that, if Monsieur Thalberg took this new direction, I did not feel called to travel the same road; and finally that I could discover in his ideas no germ of the future which others should trouble themselves to cultivate further. What I said, I said with regret, and almost compelled by the public, which had made it its task to pit us against each other, like two runners who compete in one arena for the selfsame prize" (L. Ramann's *Franz Liszt* I. 448).

performers. Vastness of proportion is the mark of his projects now; a vastness as of Walhall. But it is no nebulous vastness: in the third part of *Opera and Drama* the Drama merely shadowed in *The Art-work of the Future* is mapped out as in an ordnance-survey, every detail of construction limned as we shall later find it executed in that giant among artworks, the *Ring des Nibelungen*.

Let us trace the gradual evolution of this manifesto. We have already seen that "a longish article on Opera" was projected in a letter to Uhlig of Sept. 20, 1850. Scarcely three weeks after that, we hear: "My would-be article on Opera is becoming a piece of writing whose bulk will probably not fall far short of The Art-work of the Future. I have determined to offer it to J. J. Weber of Leipzig, to publish under the title '*Das Wesen der Oper*'; so we won't use up the man beforehand"; that is to say, the old National Theatre manuscript, the advance-guard of all the recent company of social and æsthetic essays, is to be disbanded in favour of something more urgent. Liszt also is informed, October 8: "I don't exactly know what made me express myself so bitterly about reviewers. One reason, however, at least I can state: much has determined me to speak my mind out once again, and that for good"—the "much" being doubtless in part the Weimar rendering of *Lohengrin*, in part the misconceptions of well-intentioned critics such as Dingelstedt and that anonymous contributor to the *Gegenwart*. "I am now engaged on a writing that is to be entitled 'The Essence of Opera.' In it I mean to give clear and definite expression to my views on Opera as an art-genre, and to shew as distinctly as possible what has to be done to develop into final bloom the germs that lurk in it."

Wagner's urgent task was not to proceed without interruption. His precious mornings were at first encroached on by eleemosynary labours on behalf of the Zurich theatre and its young conductor, or rather, its *two* young conductors, as detailed last chapter. The letter of Oct. 9 to Uhlig proceeds: "I've only got half-way as yet: unfortunately I'm quite prevented from continuing the work just now. I have to hold rehearsals every day; also to conduct myself, as Karl is not getting on quite so quickly." By the 22nd, however, the work appears to have been resumed, for Uhlig is told, "I shall say nothing to you at present about æsthetic scruples roused in you and others by my utterances, and even by my artistic works; for I propose to go thoroughly

and exhaustively into the whole question in my *Wesen der Oper*—which I hope to be able to send you in a month. I shall even be compelled to speak my mind about my existing operas themselves. The essay is becoming somewhat voluminous." That is just a month from its inception, and still the idea of a comprehensive treatise on the Musical Drama, as it should be, has not yet taken shape. But a month from that again, apparently with the conclusion of the almost purely critical Part I., Liszt is informed in a letter (Nov. 25)—containing a foretaste of that celebrated simile of the Two Travellers (*Op. u. Dr.* Part III. = *cf.* 132*n* & 203 *inf.*)—"My work on the Essence of Opera, the latest fruit of my meditations, is expanding to greater dimensions than I imagined when commencing it. If I am to point out to Music, as woman, the necessity of fecundation by the Poet, as man, I must take care that this glorious woman be not made defenceless over to the first libertine that comes her way,"—how we are approaching the third acts of *Die Walküre* and *Siegfried!*—"but only to the man who yearns for the woman with true resistless love. The necessity of this marriage I could not content myself with demonstrating by æsthetic abstractions, but must try to deduce it plainly from the state of modern Dramatic Poetry itself. And I hope, at the finish, completely to succeed."

Then come the rupture with the Zurich theatre and departure of his two young friends, leaving Wagner with much more time to himself. By the middle of December, in a letter to Uhlig, we get the final title of the book, with a line or two descriptive of the nature of its three component Parts, also a diagram explanatory of the genesis of what its author calls "the Perfect," or "the Consummate," Drama (*Vollendetes Drama*). The undertaking has thriven to such a compass that the book is now to be "at least twice as big as *The Art-work of the Future*"—an underestimate. It is not yet finished, but most probably will be by end of the month, and then "the whole of January, at least, will be required for its fair-copying and revising." Significant in this letter is the observation, "I rejoice for reason that I myself am coming to clearer and clearer understanding of the matter," confirming the remark in the "*Zukunftsmusik*" (1860) about "private meditations" and "the pains a creative artist once took to throw light—above all for himself—on problems generally left to the professional critic" (*P.* III. 309). All the difficulties in the way

of mapping out the "Consummate Drama" melt one by one, so soon as the artist resumes his thinking-cap; it is somewhat in the nature of a revelation to himself, a revelation to the conscious intellect of what the unconscious instinct had been urging for the last nine years (*ibid.* 321)—and thus we shall find him hastening, soon hereafter, to an analysis of his own operas in the light now gained (*Communication*). A little domestic touch is added: Minna has just made him "a most comfortable new dressing-gown," in which we may picture Richard settling down with still greater sense of intimate ease to the "private meditations" of Part III. The whole of December he works away "with fanatical diligence," in the mornings; after dinner he takes his solitary walk, communing so realistically with Uhlig in spirit, that "there really seemed no need at all to write" him; of an evening the Zurich friends are called together, from time to time, and treated to readings of whole sections of the book from the scarcely-dry rough manuscript. Early in January 1851 the Preface is written, and then begins the fair-copying. By the 20th, exactly four months from first mention of the contemplated "article," Part I. is ready for the printers, and despatched to Uhlig with a promise that II. and III. shall shortly follow; and follow they do, on February 2 and 16. In less than five months, then, was the whole gigantic task fulfilled to the last crossing of a *t*—a marvellous tour de force: "Here you have my testament—I can die happy now. What I might do beyond, to me appears a useless piece of luxury." In his own mind the entire fabric of the Perfect Drama stood erect, the vision was reality; and to this brief interval of rest we surely may assign the jotting: "To have felt, envisaged, willed the possible 'It might be'—enough! What boots possession? That vanishes" (*P.* VIII. 384).

In the letter of January 20, 1851, to Uhlig, announcing the completion of *Opera and Drama*, the work is judged thus by its author: "The first division is the shortest and easiest, perhaps also the most entertaining; the second goes deeper, and the third part goes straight to the bottom." That criticism we cannot better, but it is necessary that some faint outline of the contents be set before those who may not as yet have dipped into a book some passages in which undoubtedly present "stiff reading"—as the author confesses in his preface to the second edition (1868).

In the Introduction we are given a key to many of the polemical catchwords appearing in the breezy course of Part I., with a definite allusion to that *Gegenwart* article already-cited. Not that those catchwords require elucidation, after the pungent manner in which Wagner has played them off; nevertheless a reference to Riehl's article will furnish an added zest to some really fine touches of banter. Such a reference will further account for the anomaly of Mendelssohn's receiving any notice in this particular connection; for Riehl had hazarded the amazing statement that, "A man who might have found the right road, both with and in spite of Theory, since he coupled artistic naïvety with scientific knowledge in a degree unparalleled in musical history, —Mendelssohn, fell victim to the riddle of Death at the very moment when he was making the first start for a solution of the riddle of Opera." The whole "error," alike of composers and critics, Wagner knew to lie at back of that remark; quite apart from the perverseness of crediting the maturer Mendelssohn with naïvety. He asks at once: "Did the critic imagine he could make this solution depend on the pleasure of one peculiarly-gifted *musical* personage? Was MOZART a lesser musician? Is it possible to find anything more perfect than every piece of his *Don Giovanni?* And what, in the happiest event, could Mendelssohn have done beyond the furnishing of pieces that, number for number, should equal Mozart's in their perfection?" Surely Wagner is right, when he sympathetically concludes that, in view of such a task, "Mendelssohn's good angel closed its charge's eyes in pitying season."

Riehl's other operatic saviour is not so gently to be dismissed, even in an introductory survey: "Where the error rears itself in nakedest repulsiveness and baldest prostitution, as in the Meyerbeerian Opera, there the wholly-blinded suddenly believes he spies the lighted exit!" In one sense alone, could Meyerbeer be pointing to the exit: he had driven the meretriciousness of Opera to such a pitch, that he had come to "the end of the road; for this is Error's crown of errors, blazoning its fall." And what was the error, the initial and abiding error of the whole art-genre termed Opera? It was this:—"That **a means of expression (Music) has been made the end, while the end of expression (Drama) has been made a means.**"

There we have the fundamental theme of Part I. of *Opera and*

Drama: the drama itself had always been a consideration quite secondary to the vehicle of its presentment. As to the exact origin of Opera, no doubt, Wagner was ill- or mis-informed at the time he wrote this work; it did not originate in the wish of certain "distinguished persons, who found Palestrina's church-music no longer to their liking, to employ singers to entertain them at their festivals by singing *Arias*, i.e. folk-tunes stripped of their truth and naïvety, under which one laid word-texts arbitrarily bound into some semblance of dramatic cohesion." Two, if not three different stages of the bewildering process of origination have here been blended into one, with omission of what some people consider the most important feature. Apart, however, from our author's disclaimer of any intention to write the *history* of Opera—materials for which can scarcely have lain at his hand in Zurich—it is extremely doubtful if more than a few specialists just then knew anything at all, in Germany, about the precise objects of the Florentine inventors of the *Dramma per musica* at the end of the 16th century, or as Wagner here calls it, the "Dramatic Cantata"; for Riehl had made almost the identical mistake in his article, whilst none of the hostile reviewers of *Opera and Drama* appear to have fastened upon this cursory observation at the time.* The prime object of that little band of Italian dilettante, as every academy-student of course knows *now*, was to discover a less artificial mode of setting words to music than the contrapuntal style then reigning in the Masques and Allegories with which the Renaissance nobles were wont to regale their guests. In those masques and allegories, on the other hand, "Opera" may really be said to have begun already; though it had not begun with "arias," but with *madrigals*.

Now, with what purpose did those early Florentines conceive the innovation? They wished to revive the dramatic *style* of ancient Greece and Rome—mark the *and Rome!*—by getting dramas sung *throughout*. With this intention did Peri invent his *stilo rappresentativo*, the aim of which was "to imitate speech by means of song"; "seeing that this was dramatic poetry," as he says in his preface to *Eurydice* (1608), it must be set to a music "half-way between melody and ordinary talk." This new inven-

* In an article contributed to *The Meister* of 1895 (pp. 9 to 29) I have gone more fully into this particular question.—W. A. E.

tion had an instantaneous success in its little world, and has survived to ours as *recitativo secco*, though its dreary sameness was very soon thrust into the background by the rapid progress made in development of the Aria. Yet it is far from proved that the *stilo rappresentativo* constituted the whole substance of the works of Peri and his friends, since he speaks of "arie bellissime" composed by his comrade Jacopo Corsi for a pastoral play entitled *Dafne*, in which these two collaborated in 1594, and by Caccini for *Eurydice* itself (produced 1600). Moreover Peri's reference in the aforesaid preface to the "long runs and flourishes" with which a certain Signora had "always honoured and adorned my music" in obedience to "the custom of the day"—as he apologises—should make us pause, to ask ourselves whether the archetype of Opera was not a good deal more like Wagner's hasty sketch of it,* than the modern musical historian has chosen to allow?

We need waste no time on splitting straws. The cardinal point is this. What developed with such startling rapidity into the type of Opera that held the field for close upon three centuries, had its origin in Italy, "significantly enough," as Wagner observes in this Introduction, "the only great European land of culture in which Drama never developed to any kind of importance." There the matter lies in a nutshell. The efforts of Jacopo Corsi and his friends had been directed to the mere outside of the thing; they were men of letters, with a taste for music; polished verses and refined monody they could supply, but *dramatic power* was beyond their reach, nay, even their ken. And Apollinic refine-

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* In his *Actors and Singers*, written 1872, Wagner sums up the Florentine efforts in the light of later information, but with an insight peculiar to himself and by no means at variance with the gist of his remarks in *Opera and Drama*:—"Italian Opera is the singular miscarriage of an academic fad, according to which, if one took the versified dialogue of a theatric action modelled more or less on Seneca, and simply got it psalm-sung after the manner of church-litanies, one would find oneself on the high road to restoring Antique Tragedy, provided one also arranged for due interruption by choral chants and ballet-dances. Here the singer accordingly, dialogising with affected pathos on the unnatural stilts of Recitative, was the departure-point for practical execution of the thing. As his psalmodising became insufferably tedious, one soon allowed him to compensate himself and audience for the thankless task of recitative by production of his vocal fireworks, ultimately to be entirely severed from the text; precisely as the stiffly antiquising dancer was at last allowed the pirouette and entrechat" (*Prose Works* V. 201).

ment, without Dionysiac strength, has never been able to effect a lasting revolution in any field of art. Too soon the amateur attempt at resuscitating Antique Tragedy, for all its sincerity of aim, was submerged in the greater attractions to be found in the beauty of a melody, the marvel of a trill. Had there been a real dramatist within that antiquarian fold, the course of Opera might possibly have taken another trend; but with them, as with all their successors, "a means of expression was made the end," and the stage-play was but its platform.

From another point of view, the Florentine attempt was premature. Music itself was still too much in its infancy, for any lasting good to result. It had yet to go through that titanic process of evolution which culminated in the orchestral works of a Beethoven, before it could become the fitting instrument for a dramatist of the rank of Shakespeare or Goethe. To quote from the close of this Introduction: "It is by the collaboration of precisely *our* Music with dramatic poetry, that a hitherto undreamt significance not only can, but *must* be given to Drama."

The reader will perhaps remember how *The Art-work of the Future* advanced a somewhat startling claim on behalf of the Performer, namely that he was to be "the poet" of that Art-work; or, as Wagner wrote soon afterwards to Liszt, "The *performer* alone is the real true artist" (p. 23*n antea*). In the first chapter of Part I. of *Opera and Drama* we have a variation which throws considerable light upon that theme: the whole preposterous combination known as Opera had sprung, at bottom, from the personal conceit of the Performer: "The composer merely furnished the art-singer, the poet in his turn the composer, with the material for their virtuosity. . . . Had that Singer been a whole true Dramatic performer, the Composer must necessarily have come into his proper attitude towards the Poet; the latter would then have had the ordering of the dramatic Aim and, with it, of every measure for its realisement." Even those Renaissance pseudo-naturalists, as we have seen, were at the mercy of their virtuoso-singers. The evil waxed in time to such a pitch, however, that the Composer rebelled. In the last third of the 18th century Gluck published a manifesto: "When I undertook to set the opera Alceste to music, I resolved to avoid all those abuses which had crept into Italian Opera

through the mistaken vanity of singers and the unwise compliance of composers. . . . I endeavoured to reduce music to its proper function, that of seconding poetry by enforcing the expression of the sentiment and the interest of the situations. . . . My object was to put an end to abuses against which good taste and common-sense have long protested in vain." This was a renewal of the Florentine attempt, in a slightly different frame, and to some extent an anticipation of Wagner's far more radical reform. But again there was one fatal omission—that of the drama itself. The means of expression, to be supplied by poet and composer, still were made the main consideration; in appropriate and expressive musical Declamation, together with purification of the form and rendering of Aria, lay the aim of Gluck's fine endeavour. Not a hint is there of the necessity for the performer to represent true dramatic *characters*, instinct with life and individuality; for that demand could only be advanced by a genuine Dramatist, not a mere fabricator of operatic texts. Wagner sums up Gluck's reforms as follows:—

"Gluck assuredly was not the first to write feeling arias, nor were his singers the first to deliver them with expression. But, that he *consciously laid down the principle* of the necessity of furnishing the aria and recitative with an expression duly suited to the text—this it is that makes him the departure-point of an entire change in the relations of the factors of Opera to one another." Nevertheless, "Aria, recitative and dance-number stand just as shut off from each other in the Gluckian Opera as before. Not one jot was altered in the situation of the *poet* towards the composer; rather had the composer become more dictatorial to him [as well as to the singers]. . . . To tamper with the stringent forms which he found binding the musician himself, to claim that they should cease to be shackles on the free development of dramatic truth, would have been unthinkable to the poet; for only in those forms—inviolable by the musician—could he conceive of music."

A little later, coming to the school of Gluck, i.e. his successors Cherubini, Méhul and Spontini, we are shewn in what respect the "poet," in other words the librettist, had still remained the humble servant of the composer: "That in Drama itself lay possibilities which could not be so much as touched within that art-form—without it fell to pieces—is *now* perhaps quite plain to us, but was

bound completely to escape the composer and poet of that period [the period of hyperbole and pose]. . . . From of old it had been the poet's duty to confine himself to a settled pattern of dramatic sketches. Mere stereotyped rhetorical phrases were expected of him, for on this soil alone could the musician gain room for the wholly undramatic expression he needed. . . . Since, then, the poet felt forced to put these banal phrases into the mouths of his heroes, the best will in the world could never have enabled him either to give real character to persons who discoursed like that, or to stamp the upshot of their actions with the seal of full dramatic truth. His drama remained a mere make-believe." At last we see the difference, in Wagner's mind, between the versifier and the dramatist, though he is compelled at times to include them both in the one term "poet"; and perhaps we have gained a more thorough understanding of his dictum, that in Opera "the end of expression (Drama) has *always* been made a mere means." Even Gluck's "so famous revolution" had not, nor could have been directed to the root of the matter; for that a genuine Dramatist must have furnished the incentive. So, Gluck's was a *conscious* effort "never to sacrifice even the declamatory accent of the verse to its musical expression. He took pains to speak correctly and intelligibly in music."*

"Mozart, with a nature sound to the core, could not possibly speak otherwise than correctly. With the same distinctness did he give voice to rhetorical pigtail or true dramatic pathos; with him grey remained grey, red red. Only, that grey and red alike were bathed in the freshening dew of his music, and thus resolved into a many-nuanced grey, a many-tinted red. His music instinctively ennobled all the characters a stage-convention had cast to him, polishing the rough stone, as it were, turning its every facet to the light, and fixing it at last at such an angle that the light could smite it into warmest colour. In this way might he lift the characters in *Don Giovanni*, for instance, to such a fulness of expression. . . . Yet it is certain that Mozart could

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* It may be as well to state that I am not rigidly adhering to the order of exposition in Part I.; for Wagner brings his principal characters, Gluck, Mozart, Weber and so on, more than once upon the stage of *Opera and Drama;* they have their exits and their entrances according as they are to enact a 'scene' with one another.—W. A. E.

never have been thus characteristic in his music, had the characters themselves not been already present in the poet's work." Bear in mind that, about the same time as the above was written, Wagner had been devoting days and nights of toil to bringing *Don Giovanni* into a little more dramatic coherence, and compare these two facts with that hoot of the Dresden critics, re-echoed by a whole generation of journalistic owls throughout the world, that he scorned Mozart!

Elsewhere in this Part I. we hear: "How admirably Mozart imparted national colouring to his Osmin and his Figaro, without seeking in Turkey or Spain, or any handbook, for the hue. That Osmin and that Figaro, however, were genuine individual characters, happily outlined by a poet, equipped with true expression by the musician, and quite impossible to be spoilt by a sensible performer." But Mozart neither did, nor could *create* those characters: "Nothing is more characteristic of his career as opera-composer, than the absence of picking and choosing for his works; so far was he from poring over the æsthetic problem at bottom of Opera, that he addressed himself with the utmost unconstraint to the composition of every opera-text supplied to him. . . . He was so wholly and completely a musician, and naught save musician, that from him we may learn the most convincingly the only true and proper attitude of the musician toward the poet. . . . The grand simplicity of his purely-musical instinct made it impossible for him to produce an entrancing or intoxicating effect, as composer, where the text was dull and flat. . . . O how doubly dear and worshipful is Mozart to me, that he did *not* find it possible to write music for *Titus* like that of *Don Giovanni*, for *Così fan tutte* like that of *Figaro!* How shamefully it would have dishonoured Music." And thus, "with his wholly unreflective method, the glorious musician revealed the competence of music to answer each requirement of the poet's, even as regards truth and versatility of dramatic expression, in far richer measure than Gluck and all his followers."—How came it, then, that Mozart led off no school? "The mighty pinions of his genius had left the *formal* scaffolding of Opera entirely untouched: he had merely poured into the forms of Opera his music's stream of fire." Mozart himself was no innovator; his genius he could not bequeath to others; but, "if only he had met the *poet* whom the musician would have only had to help,

this most Absolute of all musicians would have long since solved the Opera problem by helping to create the truest, fairest and most perfect *drama*. That Poet never crossed his path."

Another line was that pursued by Weber. Out of Melody alone, the purest and sincerest melody, he would fain construct his operas; in *Der Freischütz* he had left the poet the ashes of prose dialogue, but not a line should be left in *Euryanthe* which he could not turn to melody. Thus, with the highest of intentions, the tyranny of the composer went the length of demanding that "his poetess should allow herself to be consumed flesh and bone in the glow of his melody. . . . He had lifted Melody to its fairest, most feeling nobility: he wanted now to crown it *Muse of Drama*." In Wagner's estimation, no other operatic product has so exposed the contradictoriness of the whole genus. For all Weber's gifts, his depth of feeling, and his love of truth, we here are shewn the total incompatibility of "*absolute self-sufficing melody*"—i.e. of a melody that may be "fiddled and blown, or hammered on the pianoforte, without thereby losing the least fraction of its essence"—with "*unswervingly truthful dramatic expression*." In certain parts of *Euryanthe* its composer had been positively driven to renounce his absolute melody; precisely there did he give most eloquent expression to the emotions outlined in the declamatory text; but for the most part he had striven to assign melodic value, of mosaic-like consistence, to every atom of the work. Nevertheless, it was not so much the fault of Weber, as of his poetess: "Had this text been the work of a genuine poet, who should merely have called the musician in to aid him, just as the musician here had called the poet, then that musician would not have had a moment's perplexity. In his love for the proffered drama, where he recognised no matter suited for his broader musical expression he would have employed only his lesser power, that of supplying an accompaniment subordinate but ever helpful to the whole; and only where the fullest musical expression was necessarily conditioned by the subject, would he have displayed his fullest power."

This, remember, was that Weber whom Wagner idolised as the most distinctively German of all musicians; that Weber who had gone to seek the purest folk-melody in its natural home, where "he saw the bloom on the brink of the rippling brook, amid odorous wood-grasses, upon a bed of wondrous crinkled moss,

beneath the dreamy whispering leaves of trees grown gnarled with age." But Weber plucked that bloom: "Unhappy man! Aloft in the banquet-hall he set the sweet shy flower in a costly vase. Daily he sprinkled it with freshest water from the forest stream. . . . But one by one the petals fall; weary and wan, they shower upon the carpet. With one last breath of its own sweet scent the flower sighs to the master, 'I die, since thou hast plucked me.' And with the bloom the master died."

From the venerated Gluck, the worshipped Mozart, the tenderly-loved Weber, we pass to the "frivolous" variety of operatic composers, represented mainly by Rossini.

If Weber strove to build a drama of melodic flowers, Rossini had no such futile ambition: he merely "set death and the devil to amusing melodies." The opera-public, of "civilised savages," had not asked for Drama at all, simply for "a pleasure seasoned with the sauces of the stage." Rossini gave it "melody that was just *melody* and nothing else; that glides into the ear—one knows not why; that returns to one—one knows not why; that one exchanges to-day with that of yesterday, and forgets again to-morrow—one also knows not why; that sounds sad when we are merry, and merry when we're out of sorts; and still we hum it to ourselves—goodness only knows why." Rossini, manifestly, is not to be taken too seriously; so Wagner spends on him the choicest and least stinging of his humour. "To the singers, who before had had to pump dramatic expression into a tedious nothing-saying text, he said: 'Make what you like of the words; but be sure you don't forget to get yourselves roundly applauded for boisterous runs and melodic entrechats.'—To the bandsmen, trained before to accompany pathetic vocal phrases as intelligently as possible in unanimous ensemble, he said: 'Take it easy; but mind you get well clapped for your personal dexterity, wherever I give you each his opportunity.'—To the librettist, who before had sweated blood under the exactions of the dramatic composer, he said: 'Friend, just please yourself; for I've no earthly use for you.'" The gratitude of them all was immense, of course, but nothing to equal the public's. "Who, with so much competence, had been so condescending to it? Did he hear that the audience in one city had a particular fancy for prima donna's runs, whilst that in another preferred a sentimental ditty, straight-

way he gave his singers nothing but runs for the first city, nothing but sentimental ditties for the second. Had he gathered that people *here* liked a drum in the band, at once he made the overture to a rustic opera begin with a tattoo. Was he told that *there* folk doted on crescendo in ensembles, he cast a whole opera in the form of a perpetually recurring crescendo."

With Rossini the "life-story of Opera came to end"; he had virtually slain it, when he "candidly told the crowd the truth" about it.* "At his prime, he never could have dreamt that a caricature of all its styles would soon be cobbled up . . . that it would some day occur to the bankers, for whom he had always made their music, to make it for themselves."

French Opera of the serious order had long become "a garish corpse," typified by Spontini, who "embalmed himself alive." Auber's "dumb-struck Muse of Drama (*Masaniello*) broken-heartedly making away with herself in a stage-volcano," and Rossini's yodelling *Tell*, lent it a temporary resuscitation, affording German critics the unspeakable delight of a new category under which to classify, namely "the National." But that vein was speedily worked out, and at last the Israelites laid hands on Paris with such effect that, "invited to blow off another tune for the Parisians, in a momentary lull, Rossini answered that he would never return 'till the Jews had finished with their Sabbath there.'" Aaron's rod had swallowed all the others.

The vivisection of Meyerbeerian Opera is the most brilliant piece of work in all this luminously critical review. Spread over three separate chapters, it traces to their origin the various tendencies the Jew composer had borrowed for amalgamation. Three chapters devoted entirely to Meyerbeer in the manner of the ordinary analyst, would have been rather too much of a good thing; but here we have a little drama, in which the villain of the piece is confronted with all the other characters in turn, till a climax is reached in the grand tableau of his final exposure. Having already dealt with the majority of those characters, our method, of course, must be different; an abstract is all we can venture.

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* Bellini and Donizetti are dismissed in a couple of lines, as quite subordinate in rank to Rossini. Verdi, as remarked before, had scarcely dawned upon the German public, and therefore is not mentioned.

"The Musician was bound to fulfil his destiny of gladdening German Criticism — for whom it is notorious that Providence created Art—with the present of an 'Historical music.'" Such, apparently, was Meyerbeer's mission — in the eyes of critics. "Alas! in those historic times, so piquant in their costume, people were barbarous enough to have no opera." The only serviceable thing they had, it seemed, were church-hymns. Never mind: "those hymns really have something startlingly foreign to our modern music, if one springs them on us unawares. Excellent! Hymns to the fore! Religion shall march on the boards." As Riehl had spoken of Meyerbeer's "emancipation of the masses," it was only natural that Wagner should ironically cap it with an "emancipation of the Church." Unfortunately, however, "to have to do with none but monks and clerics, would seriously have damped the gaiety of Opera; religion must be content with its proper place among the other emancipates." How was the rest of the work to sound Historic, then? By "emancipating metaphysics," making something out of two nothings, turning one's expression into the opposite of what people were used to, making it say No when one meant Yes, appear joyful when one had to picture sorrow: in a word, by adopting what Riehl had christened the "Neo-romantic."

It was merely an adoption. Through a perversity of Berlioz', it had descended from Beethoven to Meyerbeer: a singular parentage. If Weber and Rossini had made their operas entirely of melody, at least it had been *vocal* melody. At Berlioz' curiosity-shop Meyerbeer found a scrappy form of *instrumental* melody, and clapped it on the human voice. But what had BEETHOVEN to do with it? *

"In the works of the second half of his artist-life, Beethoven is unintelligible—or rather, misintelligible—precisely where he wants to express a particular individual Content in the most intelligible manner. . . . Most of Beethoven's works of this period must be regarded as attempts to frame a language to convey his longing; so that they often seem like sketches for a picture as to whose

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* *Fidelio* is not even distantly referred-to in *Opera and Drama;* obviously, because it had no influence on the course of the genre itself; for Wagner has elsewhere drawn a moral, more than once, from Beethoven's abandonment of Opera after this solitary effort.

subject the master was probably at one with himself, but not as to its intelligible portrayal.* . . . In these sketches for his greater paintings the effort to discover a new fund of musical language often shewed itself in paroxysmal traits that needs must strike the uninitiated listener as odd, original, bizarre, at anyrate quite novel." These weird and enigmatic utterances soon fell a prey to imitators; but, "as there were merely externals to be copied, since the Content of those idioms was to stay the *unuttered* secret of the master," the purely-instrumental writers took refuge in "a programme setting forth some scene from Nature or the life of Man, which they put into their hearer's hand to guide his fancy through the motleyest maze of musical freaks." In Germany the wildest of the resultant antics had happily been avoided—down to then; but "if Beethoven mostly gives us the impression of a man who has something to tell us, though he cannot convey it distinctly, these modern followers appear like men who, often in a charmingly circumstantial fashion, inform us that they have no message at all"—evidently Mendelssohn and his school of orchestral landscapists.

Enter "a Frenchman gifted with extraordinary musical ability," who pursued this line to its extreme. "Hector Berlioz is the direct and most energetic offshoot of Beethoven on that side from which the latter turned away so soon as he advanced from the sketch to the finished picture. The hasty jagged penstrokes wherewith Beethoven jotted down his trials for new channels of expression, often thrown upon the paper without discriminating choice, were almost the sole heritage of the great artist that fell into the eager pupil's hand. . . . Certain it is, that Berlioz' artistic inspiration was begotten of enamoured gazing on those strangely twisted strokes. Horror and transport took him at sight of these magic symbols, in which the master had bound transport and horror in one common spell. . . . The

* This is not the only passage in Wagner's writings of the Zurich period where he advances the same hypothesis (years before the publication of Beethoven's Sketch-book); yet it seems to have never occurred to any of his interlocutors to ask him for a list of the works to which he refers. It is too much a question for the *musician*, for me to try to deal with it; but a partial clue may perhaps be found in the *Beethoven* essay (1870), where the C sharp minor Quartet is expounded at length as "the picture of a day" from the composer's life (*P.* V. 96-8).—W. A. E.

gazer was seized with vertigo: in wild confusion a witch-like chaos danced before his eyes. . . . In the endeavour to impart the visions of his gruesomely heated fancy to the unbelieving hidebound world of his Parisian environment, Berlioz' enormous musical capacity drove him to a technique never dreamt before. What he had to tell these people was so strange, so unaccustomed, so utterly unnatural, that he never could have said it out in simple homely words: for that he needed a gigantic apparatus of the most complicated machines." The wonders of Berlioz' orchestration are acknowledged by Wagner to the full, but the very "supernaturalism of his desires forced him at last into an all-devouring materialism, and to-day, though still consumed by true artistic yearning, he already lies hopelessly buried beneath the heap of his machines."

Returning to Meyerbeer, Grand Opera "gulped down this Berliozian Neo-romanticism, too, as a plump fine-flavoured oyster, to regain a brisk and well-to-do complexion." The "kaleidoscope in which Berlioz had rattled parti-coloured stones" was annexed by the operatist, who picked out the fragments and transferred them *to the voice*, "preposterously stringing together the most heterogeneous and conflicting of melodic elements"; and this the critics sagely dubbed "dramatic Characteristique." The stage-characters themselves, you see, had become mere masks, "to be artfully enlivened by reflected colour"; so the tailor and the carpenter were set to work over-time, and one quadrupled the size of the chorus. "The massive Chorus of our modern Opera is but the stage-machinery set on foot, the dumb pageant of the coulisses translated into nimble noise. 'Prince and Princess,' with the best of wills, had nothing more to say than their weather-worn bravura-aria; so one tried to give the theme variety by making the whole theatre join in that aria, down to the last-hundredth chorister, and that in roaring *unison*. . . . Thus, too, has our modern State emancipated the masses, when it makes them march battalion-wise in soldier's uniform, wheel left and right, present and shoulder arms: and when the Meyerbeerian 'Huguenots' attain their acme of effect, we *hear* exactly what we *see* in a Prussian regiment of Guards. German critics call it Emancipation of the Masses."

Now, what was the secret of this Meyerbeerian Opera, which had "drowned the drama, man and mouse, paintbrush and

shears, in the deluge of its music"? It was Effect; effect without a cause; effect at any price. "Meyerbeer was no moon-struck dreamer; with a keen eye for the main chance, he saw that harmonious concord would have won him not a creature in the modern audience, whereas a dash of all sorts would treat every man to his humour. Nothing, therefore, was more important to him than a many-coloured hotch-potch, and the merry Scribe must sweat blood to concoct a dramatic medley to his taste. Cold-blooded the musician stood before it, deliberating as to which inch of the monstrosity would carry some rag from his musical store-room so strikingly and cryingly that it should appear quite outrageous, and therefore 'characteristic.'" Here was the last and worst result of the Composer's supremacy. "As a delicate compliment, people told him that the texts of his operas were very poor stuff, but what *marvels his music had made of the rubbish!*" Yet Scribe was his librettist. Scribe, who "continued to write quite fluent, often interestingly conceived, and always skilfully constructed dramatic poems for other composers, turned out for Meyerbeer the veriest shoddy; actions without a plot, situations of the most insane confusion, characters of the most ridiculous grotesqueness. . . . Scribe must have had his brain unhinged first, before he conjured up a *Robert the Devil;* he must have been robbed of all sense of dramatic action, before he lent himself in the *Huguenots* to the compilation of mere scene-shifter's contrasts; he must have been violently inducted into the mysteries of Historical hanky-panky, before he condescended to a *Prophet* of the sharpers. . . . Music's last triumph was reached: the Composer had razed the Poet to the ground, and upon the ruins of operatic-poetry the *musician* was crowned the only *legitimate poet.*"

In illustration of this effect-without-a-cause we are presented with a most telling double version of the famous banner-scene in *le Prophète;* first, as it should have been—to have any real cause; secondly, as it is—mere effect. Reading the first version, we are involuntarily reminded of act i of *Rienzi;* a charge of plagiarism could scarcely have been more subtly suggested. The sting of the second version is chiefly contained in its tail, a footnote in imaginary dialogue: "'We didn't want your glorious hero of the people; he is nothing more than a substitution of your private revolutionary fancy. What we meant to shew, was an unfortunate

young man, who, soured by nasty experiences, and led astray by tricky agitators, lets himself be provoked into crime; which he thereafter atones by sincere contrition.' I go on to ask the meaning of the sun effect. 'It's faithfully copied from Nature. Why should the sun not rise in the early morning?'" A very practical apology for "an involuntary sunrise," as Wagner remarks in the most mordent of sarcasm; but unfortunately that theatrical sun could not rise without premeditation, and, as everyone knows, its *effect* was the talk of the town—a pantomime effect, on a par with the ballet for skaters.

Never had Meyerbeer received such a trouncing; and fifty years ago it was a most intrepid act. To-day there is scarcely a serious musician, or even a fairly-cultured opera-goer, but would endorse every line of the verdict; but in those days such an exposure of the operatic Cagliostro amounted to a challenge to the deadliest reprisals. *Judaism in Music* was almost a flattery, compared to this; Wagner's signature to the one, of course, revealed his authorship of the other; and the consequences of thus openly daring the all-powerful were to leave a deep-ploughed furrow on our hero's life.

Yet even to his pet aversion our Daniel-come-to-judgment can be just: "In certain passages of his operatic music Meyerbeer raises himself to the most indisputable, the grandest artistic height." The reason is of the very greatest importance to our inquiry: "These passages are the outcome of genuine inspiration; and if we look closer, we shall see whence that inspiration flowed—namely, from a genuinely poetic situation. Where the poet forgot his stringent heed of the musician, where the dramatic compiler alit on a moment in which the free and freshening breath of human life might come and go—of a sudden he transmits that breath to the musician; and now the composer, who had exhausted all the capital of his musical predecessors without its enabling him to give one sign of true invention of his own, at once is empowered to find the richest, noblest and most soul-stirring musical expression." As an example, Wagner cites the celebrated love scene in the fourth act of the *Huguenots*, "by side of various parts whereof there is very little else that can be set, and certainly none but the most consummate of Music's works." Remember from whom this admission comes; from an antagonist to whom the music of a century, alike operatic and

instrumental, was as familiar as household words through twelve busy years of conducting; from a man who never stooped to insincerity. Wagner makes it "with sincerest joy and true enthusiasm, because this very feature bares to us the real essence of Art so irrefutably, that we can but see with rapture how the power of genuine art-creation is bound to come even to the most hardened of music-makers so soon as he sets foot upon the soil of a Necessity stronger than his selfish Caprice." *

The survey of Opera is finished; for it would have ill become our author to set his *Dutchman*, *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin* in direct comparison with his rival's works, even for the purpose of that investigation which he had originally proposed. Yet what gives such peculiar value to the remorseless strictures quoted above, some of them half dethroning idols of the reviewer's personal veneration, is that his own experience both as conductor and composer enabled him to speak as one that had authority, and not as the scribes. Gluck, Weber and Schumann, each had lifted up his voice against abuses; but none of them had either the vast range of knowledge, the combination of analytic with synthetic force, or that extraordinary command of language, possessed by Richard Wagner. It is this that places the first half of *Opera and Drama* on a level with *Modern Painters;* we here have found the Ruskin after whom we had gone in search. In the whole field of musical literature, of musical æsthetics, there is nothing comparable with this review: instead of toilsome history, or anatomical dissection, we have illuminating intuition, profundity of conviction, and seriousness relieved with countless flashes of the most scintillating wit. Only creative genius of the highest order could have produced this masterpiece of criticism; and thus are fully justified those words in its Introduction: "Completely to overcome the error, artists must make one final

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* The "necessity" was in this case a trifle more material than Wagner seems to have been aware of; for L. Ramann tells us on the authority of Liszt himself—who "was witness to this little episode behind the wings"—that the great French tenor Adolphe Nourrit, for whom the part was written, "returned to Meyerbeer the manuscript of his rôle in the *Huguenots*, because it contained a highly frivolous [polite German for "improper"] alcove-scene between Raoul and Valentine, in which he declined to share. Meyerbeer and Scribe thereupon re-wrote this scene, and gave it the heroic stamp it bears to this day" (*Franz Liszt*, I. 456-7).

manly effort, and practise criticism themselves. The hour that clamours for that effort has struck already; we *must* do what we dare not leave undone without we mean to end as imbeciles."

The "death of Opera," as publicly attested by Meyerbeer's masquerade, has already brought us to the eve of the marriage of Poetry and Music in the Consummate Drama. But the stale reek of Meyerbeerian orgies must first be washed away. From Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, where music finds at last its mate in Schiller's words, does Wagner take his leap into the future: "Just as the living folk-melody is inseparable from the living folk-poem, at pain of organic death, so Music's organism can never bear the true, the living Melody, except it first be fecundated by the poet's Thought. Music is the bearing woman, the Poet the begetting man." And "the nature of Woman is love. She first gains full individuality at the moment of surrender. She is the Daughter of the Waves gliding soulless through her native element, till she receives her soul through love of a man." Now, Italian operatic music is "a wanton"; French "a coquette"; German "a repulsive prude."* The "woman" of whom Wagner dreams must be pure, but capable of surrendering "her whole being" to the man she loves (a Brünnhild, in fact), music such as of "that glorious musician in whom Music was all that in a human soul she ever can be, if she is to be nothing else than Music." So the twin pillars of this terrible iconoclast's 'music of the future' turn out to be Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. But "before we give away this woman's love, we must inquire if the love of the man is something to be begged for, or something *he* also needs for his redemption."

In Part II.—"The Play and the nature of Dramatic Poetry"—we therefore have to ascertain if the highest type of Drama can dispense with music's aid.

What strikes us at once in this division, is the paucity of dramatists of the first magnitude, as compared with the musicians, even with the opera-composing musicians. In course of one chapter, barely eight-and-twenty pages, we arrive at the

* "By 'German' Opera I naturally do not mean the Opera of Weber, but that modern counterfeit of composers who pride themselves on *understanding music much better* than the Italians and French" (Wagner's footnote, abridged).

end of the list, with something to spare. One explanation, of course, is to be found in the fact that the principal nations of Europe had grown so accustomed to taking their doses of Opera either in the Italian tongue or in a hack-translation to their own vernacular, that an opera could easily attain far wider circulation than any spoken play. Another, connected therewith, would reside in the universality of Music's appeal, her language being equally intelligible within certain limits to all the world, especially when assisted by the scene. Still, the fact remains (and a most important fact it is) that, purposing to deal with serious Drama on the same lines as *Opera seria*, Wagner can count his modern world-wide dramatists on the fingers of one hand: Shakespeare, Racine, Goethe, Schiller—with Calderon added in a footnote to the second edition. The Greek tragedians he had dealt with in two previous essays: here they are merely introduced as involuntary sponsors to the frigid offspring of a Racine. By no means would Racinian Tragédie conform to the ideal the master sets before him; had it not been answerable for the stilted rhetoric that vitiated Gluck's best efforts? This petrifaction was not the mould into which to pour a living Myth, for the composer to wed to pulsing music. Neither had Goethe or Schiller solved the problem of modern Drama: as for the *Wallenstein* trilogy, in three plays a Shakespeare would have given us the whole Thirty-years War; whilst Goethe's *Faust* "stands on the watershed between medieval Romance and the true Dramatic matter of the Future."—But Shakespeare—whom, with a discernment quite unusual in his day, Wagner rates high above all other dramatists since Sophocles — "With fullest necessity did Shakespeare's Drama spring from Life and our historic evolution: his creation was just as much conditioned by the nature of our poetic art, as the Drama of the Future will be born from the satisfaction of a need which Shakespearian Drama has roused, indeed, but not yet stilled." Just as one condition still was wanting, to make Mozart the Musician of the Future, so with Shakespeare on the dramatist's side: had he felt the one additional necessity, of presenting the *scene* itself to his auditors' eyes, in lieu of leaving it to their imagination, "he would have sought to satisfy it by a still more careful sifting, a still more strenuous compression of the Romance's plethora of matter—precisely as he had contracted the show-place, abridged the time-length of performance, and

for their sakes partially curtailed that plethora itself." But he would then have discovered, according to Wagner, that neither medieval Romance, nor History, admit of such further condensation; therefore, that they are no true subjects for the *perfect* Drama.

In subsequent chapters we are shewn the value of this condensation, in order that the subject, or "action," may be presented to the directly-seizing Feeling, instead of to the analytic Understanding. But the point Wagner omits to make—though it would have been a strong one in his case—is this: having at disposal nothing but "word-speech" and gesture, i.e. deprived of the "*emotionalising* aid of music," if Shakespeare wished to keep the Feeling spell-bound, there was nothing for it but to draw on a whole arsenal of staggering or pathetic incidents, as we may see on comparing the technique of *Macbeth*, or *King Lear* with that of the more purely intellectual *Hamlet*.

Mere Literary drama having been curtly dismissed as a dead-alive hybrid, we are taken in Chapter 2 to a review of the Romance itself, for the purpose of proving its unsuitableness as matter for Drama; whereas the next two chapters emphasise the merits of the Myth, "true for all time, inexhaustible throughout the ages; the poet's only task, to interpret it." This affords an opening for an episode that constitutes the gem of the book as a piece of elevated writing, an exposition of the myth of Œdipus;* a gem doubly welcome, since it lights up what I am bound to term an infelicitous digression into abstract matters such as the State, Society and the rights of the Individual, and so on, evidently suggested by the need of "individuality" in a dramatist's characters, but more appropriate for that projected, though never-written *Life of the Future*. However, at the end

* An episode which to me appears to have been introduced after the rest of the book was written, with the express purpose of relieving a particularly stiff piece of reading; just as the parable of Wayland the Smith was tacked to the end of *The Art-work of the Future*. For further arguments in support of this theory I must refer the reader to my preface to *Prose Works* II., only adducing one omitted there:—The proofs of Part II. of *Opera and Drama* were manifestly received and corrected by Wagner partly during, partly a short while after, Uhlig's visit in the summer of 1851; precisely at that time he was interpolating the Wate allegory into the exordium of his *Communication*, as I believe I have sufficiently demonstrated on page 479 *infra*. This in itself

of Chapter 4 we are out of the wood, with a most important statement as to the *nature* of the subject-matter of the "Consummate Drama." According to our author, "In Drama we must become *knowers through the Feeling*. . . . The Feeling understands no language save its own. Things which are only to be explained through the endless accommodations of the Understanding, embarrass and confound the Feeling. In Drama, therefore, an action is explicable only when it is completely vindicated to the Feeling; and it thus is the dramatic poet's task, not so much to invent actions, as to make an action so intelligible through its emotional necessity that we may dispense altogether with the intellect's assistance in its vindication." By way of twofold illustration, we may refer to the bridal-chamber scene between Elsa and Lohengrin.

Next come the reasons why Historic drama is rejected; reasons with which we are already familiar, as having ruled *Friedrich Rothbart* out of court two years ago. "An action which is to be explained only on grounds of Historic relations, vindicated only from the standpoint of the State, or understood alone by taking count of religious Dogma—such an action is only representable to the Understanding, not to the Feeling." Neither is the play-with-a-purpose compatible with that Emotional Drama we are seeking for: "An action which is to justify itself before and through the Feeling, busies itself with no *moral;* its whole moral consists precisely in its justification by the instinctive human Feeling; it is a goal to itself." Nor is this "action" to be on a petty, insignificant scale; though proceeding from the simplest and most universal of relations, it is to be heroic in proportions, and "exhaustively to display the nature of Man along the line selected."

Chapter 5 is devoted to the Supernatural, or as Wagner prefers

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would form a striking parallel; but in addition we find our author introducing Antigone into that very part of the *Comm.* (*P.* I. 342) on which he must have been engaged directly after Uhlig's departure, and also attaching to the end of Part II. of *Op. and Dr.* (proofs whereof he would receive about the end of August) a second-thought footnote "referring the reader to his exposition of that myth" of three or four sheets earlier (*P.* II. 236*n* and 180-90), just as if the subject had but recently taken strong hold of his mind. Possibly the Œdipus myth had cropped up in conversation with Uhlig, as a pendant to the story of Siegmund and Sieglinde related by Brünnhilde in the original poem of *Young Siegfried*, not ten days old when the guest arrived.—W. A. E.

to call it, "the Wonder," in dramatic art. Desirous of appealing to the emotions, not by way of shock (as in the melodrama), but through depth of impression, the poet must win their sympathy for the *motives* of what our author terms a "moment-of-action"—a term self-explanatory, however uncouth: "In the interest of intelligibleness, therefore, he has so to *limit* the number of his Action's moments that he may gain the needful space for motivation of those retained." Having thus "condensed" his action, he is more than justified in strengthening it by representing his characters as magnified beyond the scale of ordinary life: "Even the most unwonted shapes, which the poet has to evoke in this procedure, will never truly be *unnatural*, for in them Nature's essence is not distorted, but merely her scattered utterances are gathered into one perspicuous image" (In *The Tempest*, for instance, who would venture to say that Ariel and Caliban appear unnatural?). And the very Elements may enter into Drama such as this, for "In Feeling's highest agitation Man sees in Nature a sympathising being. . . . In his times of great inward commotion, man sees no longer any *chance* in his encounter with natural phenomena . . . his own enhanced or altered mood he recognises again in Nature, whose mightiest utterances he thus refers to himself, equally as he feels himself determined by them. In this sense of reciprocity the phenomena of Nature condense, before his Feeling, to a definite shape, to which he assigns an individual emotion answering to their impression upon him and his mood; to this shape he finally attributes organs—intelligible to himself—wherewith to speak out that emotion. Then he *speaks* with Nature, and she *answers* him." In which we see how near the author is drawing to the wood-bird of his as yet unwritten *Junger Siegfried*, to the storms and moonlight, clouds and flames of his unborn *Walküre*, the water-maidens, thunder-mists and rainbow of his dormant *Rheingold*. "In this agitation Man understands Nature according to an infinitely greater compass, and understands her in such fashion as the widest-reaching Understanding can never grasp. Here Man *loves* Nature; he ennobles her, uplifts her to a sympathising sharer in his highest mood." Thus we are brought back again, by easy stages, to *Mythos* as "the highest conceivable" poetic power: "Myth vindicated by the clearest human consciousness, Myth newly-moulded to the world-views of an ever-present Life,

and brought in Drama to a show the most intelligible."—That Wagner himself departed from strict Mythos in still later works, is a contention over which we need not waste our time: setting aside *Die Meistersinger* as Comedy, and therefore beyond the scope of the present inquiry, both *Tristan* and *Parsifal* are treated by him in such fashion that the overladen legends turn into eternal Myths, whereas the main blemish on his already-written *Siegfried's Tod* is due to its legendary, and not its mythic source.

There still remains one chapter of Part II.; but let us pause to fix the issue of what has gone before. Starting with an inquiry into the nature of mere Opera—like Saul going out in search of his father's asses—we have found our author soaring to the very throne of Tragedy. Effrontery! the literary critics all cried out —without so much as whipping out their paper-knives. But the fact remains, as stated at the end of cap. 1 of this Part II., "*We have no Drama nowadays, and can have none;* our Literary-drama is every whit as far removed from genuine Drama, as the pianoforte from the symphonic song of human voices . . . a soulless poetry, a toneless music. With *this* Drama, at all events, true Music can have nothing to do." That was written fifty years ago, but stands as true to-day. Apart from Wagner himself, where is the practical dramatist in all the nineteenth century worthy to be mentioned in the same breath with Shakespeare and Æschylus? Seeing the enormous power for good or evil wielded by the Theatre, it was a crying need, the need of living Drama. With the divine afflatus stirring once more in his breast, the greatest dramatist of the past three centuries here opens up to us the mysteries and requirements of his calling. Drama—christen it "Music-drama," "Musical Drama," "Word-tone Drama," as you will; no matter the predicate, if you but remember it was DRAMA that Richard Wagner aimed at. Could he have convinced himself that its highest type would dispense with music, there can be little doubt but that he himself would have taken leave of Tone, as we have already seen him meditating with his *Rothbart*. But no. Having recognised in *emotional* Drama that highest type, and the type to appeal to high and low alike, as the really perfect artwork *must*,* there was nothing for it but to clothe that Drama in the language of the emotions, soul-stirring Music:

* In Schiller's *Kleine Schriften* see his essay "Ueber Bürger's Gedichte," with its definition of true "popularity," the popularity of a Homer.

"the poet who wishes to give expression to a consuming feeling, can no longer work with merely hinting, shadowing Word-speech, *except he so enhance it* as he has already enhanced its motives; and this he can only do by pouring it into Tone-speech."

With these words closes chapter 5 of Part II. Chapter 6 expounds them. Starting with the axiom, that "The earliest mouthpiece of the *inner man* is Tone-speech, the most instinctive utterance of the inner Feeling stimulated from without," we are shewn how the intellect has dulled and robbed of all vitality the language of our daily life, "a language we do not understand with the Feeling, since its connection with the objects whose impression on our faculties first moulded the speech-roots has become incognisable to us; a language of *convention*, given us to *suppress* our feelings; a language in which the euphony of sounding vowels is evaporated to the clatter of Talk." Before we can arrive at a word-language fit to be clothed with the emotional power of Music in the combined Dramatic Artwork, our author deems it all-important to return to the simplest *roots*, and therefore to old Alliterative verse, or "Stabreim."—As this point will be resumed in Part III., on the verge of which we now are standing, I may seize the opportunity of referring to the fuss that has been made about Wagner's subsequently departing from this maxim, so that in *Tristan* we get a blend of end-rhyme and alliteration, whilst *Parsifal* has hardly any stabreim, and in *Die Meistersinger* end-rhyme reigns supreme. But, unlike the previous considerations, this is purely a matter of technique. Evidently the artist found by experience that he had laid unnecessary weight upon alliteration pure and simple; and as for the length and style of a verse, that must depend on its matter and the character of the dramatic situation — what would be appropriate to Siegfried or Siegmund, for instance, would hardly fit Gurnemanz or Beckmesser.

With Part III.—styled "The arts of Poetry and Tone in the Drama of the Future"—Wagner "begins in earnest," as he remarks to Uhlig in December 1850. There are certain textual difficulties in the way of its understanding, here and there, largely due to want of revision; but the main principles of his own practice are so exhaustively set forth in this "constructive" part of *Opera and Drama*, as to make it handsomely reward the very

closest study. Part II. had established the Substance of this "Drama of the Future"; Part III. maps out its Form, alike musical and poetic. The Poet, as the male in this "marriage," is naturally the first to be dealt with; in fact Chapters 1 and 2 are mainly an elaboration of hints already dropped in the closing chapter of Part II. The Poet has ever striven "to attune the organ of the Understanding, absolute Word-speech, to an emotional expression such as might help him to convey his message to the Feeling." That is the cardinal point: the speech of everyday is too prosaic for higher Drama, until it has been "enhanced" by some means or other. We shall learn in due course that this enhancement can never be complete without the aid of Music; but we have first to ascertain how far the word-poet has been able to get without it. The inadequacy of all modern prosodic devices, the folly of attempting nowadays to create artificial "longs and shorts,"* are exemplified in a consideration of Greek metre: "Our prosodists and metricists had nothing in ear but our hurried speaking-accent, cut loose from feeling melody, when they invented the standard by which two 'shorts' must invariably equal one 'long.' The explanation of Greek metres in which six or more 'shorts' are matched at times by two, or even a single 'long,' must have readily occurred to them, had they had in ear for that so-called 'long' the *long-held note of a musical bar*, such as those Greek lyrists still had in *their* ear when they set new words to known folk-melodies." The other way in which the Poet had attempted to enhance his vehicle of expression, had been the post-classic End-rhyme, borrowed from the hymns of the Church, where it marked the end of an otherwise indistinguishable musical 'period,' but used in secular poetry as a mere expedient for marking off a verbal line and thus defining to the ear a rhythm it never could have unravelled for itself (something like the ting of the typewriter's bell—to present our author with an up-to-date analogy). Having no "organic function in the phrase," and frequently falling on the least important word, it also is a half-hearted substitute for music: "The

* Here, and onward, we have more than an anticipation of "the doctrine of Stress." To myself it has always been incomprehensible, how two great poets like Goethe and Schiller could have wasted so much time in forcing the German language into hexameters and pentameters; the conversion of an "und" into a long syllable is enough to paralyse the modern ear.—W. A. E.

end-rhymed verse is an attempt to communicate a heightened subject in such a way as to produce a correspondingly heightened impression on the Feeling, through its expression's differing from that of everyday speech." But it only tickled the ear, this end-rhyme: "Through a mere intensification of Word-speech into end-rhymed Verse, the poet can attain nothing beyond the compulsion of the ear to an unsympathetic, a puerilely superficial attention." The entirely *un*musical nature of both these types of Verse was proved by the fact that, "in any brush with Melody their falsity and nullity must come to open exposure. The Rhythmic-verse was resolved by the melody into its truly quite un-rhythmic fractions, which then were newly patched together at rhythmic Melody's good pleasure; whilst the End-rhyme was drowned, past trace or hearing, in the mighty billows of her sound." If, on the other hand, "the musician held to the *rhetorical accent*, as the only thing to afford a natural and intelligible bond between the talk and the melody"—and Gluck is instanced—"he dissolved into prose not only the verse, but also his melody, and nothing remained but *a musical prose*."

So much for the past. With Chapter 2—a very hard one to decypher—we begin the method "of the future"; a method, be it said, already instinctively adopted in the poem of *Siegfried's Tod* two years before, and therefore no product of mere theorising. After what has just been said of Gluck's "musical prose," this chapter's opening lines may startle at first sight: "If we wish to remain in an intelligible relation to Life, we have to win *from the prose of our ordinary speech* that heightened Expression in which the poetic-aim * may reveal itself all-powerfully to the Feeling." From the Prose of daily life, forsooth! All our elegant "poetic diction" to be thrown out of window? Yes; but with a reservation. "In our language of daily life we deal with things having no more touch with the meaning of our actual roots of speech than with Nature at large; it therefore has to take the most complicated turns and twists, to circumscribe the meanings of native or imported speech-roots, and thus prepare them for a conventional understanding. As our sentences

* The so frequently recurring term "*die dichterische Absicht*" constitutes one of the chief stumbling-blocks in this portion of the treatise. One might render it at times "the poet's intention," were it not that it often denotes rather the (Platonic) *idea* on which his drama is founded.

are diffuse, and endlessly expanded to admit this apparatus of accommodation, they would be made completely unintelligible if the speaking-accent gave prominence to the root-syllables by frequent emphasis." The remedy is "condensation" again, to reduce each sentence to its "purely-human core." Nothing new, in principle, for "the beauty of a verse has hitherto consisted in the poet's having cut away from his phrase, as much as possible, whatever subsidiary words too cumbrously hedged its main-accent." Still, "the poet has never yet been able to bring this to such a point that he could impart his subject unconditionally to the Feeling and nothing else; that enhancement he could have reached through nothing save an ascent of his verse into Melody": i.e. the word-poet had always felt that too simple and direct a diction would inevitably fall flat. With the aid of music that fear may be banished, providing the language not only be natural, but vividly stressed. "A faithful observation of the mode of expression we employ when our Feeling is highly wrought, even in ordinary life, will supply the poet with an unfailing measure for the number of accents in a natural Phrase. In frank emotion, when we bid farewell to all those conventional considerations that dictate the spun-out modern phrase, we always try to express ourselves *in one breath*, as briefly and to the point as possible.* But in this succinct expression we emphasise far more strongly than usual—through the force of passion—and draw our accents closer together; whilst, to make these accents *im*press the hearer's Feeling as forcibly as we want to *ex*press in them our own, we dwell on them with sharply-lifted voice. The number of these Accents—that instinctively round themselves to a phrase, or a main section of a phrase, during the outflow of one breath—will always stand in direct ratio to the character of the agitation; so that, for instance, an angry, *active* emotion will allow a greater number of

* As a humorous pendant to the above, we may quote from the 1841 article on the *Reine de Chypre* the following characteristic passage, which shews that even then our author was wrestling with this problem of musico-dramatic diction:—"What, for instance, is an operatic Lieutenant or Major to say and sing, when rustics set a-thrashing him? Nothing else, to be sure, than 'Jott's schwere Noth!'—which indeed would sound quite pointed and dramatic. But instead you let him sing about 'the finger of fate,' 'the will of the gods,'" and so on.

accents to the emission of one breath, whereas a deeply *suffering* one will consume the whole breath-power in fewer long-drawn tones.* The poet, therefore, will regulate the number of his accents by the particular emotion, and rid his verse of that excess of explanatory and auxiliary words peculiar to the complex phrase of Literature." We now are hovering on the brink of music: "His power here is boundless in variety; but he cannot become fully aware of it, till he raises the rhythm of accented Speech to that of Music. The purely-musical beat affords the poet possibilities of diction he was forced to renounce from the outset for his merely spoken word-verse." No longer need he fear a sing-song emphasis being thrust into the midst of 3, 4, or maybe 5 short syllables which he meant to sound evenly crisp or slurred; the simplest musical notation will guard against that. "This beat, however, the poet alone has to regulate, according to the expression he intends; he must not have it forced on him" by the musician. As yet he is entirely on his own domain; the *rhythm* of the "verse-melody" is to be as much his affair as the words and subject.

We are nearly at the end of the Poet's function, but have still to follow him into what we may call the very colours on his palette, his consonants and vowels. *Stabreim* once more takes the field; and, though his later practice proves that Wagner himself considered he had attached too much importance to Alliteration, his exposition of its general advantages is most enlightening. For one thing, he grounds this Stabreim on the principle of Repetition, the oldest, most natural, and most universal of all artistic laws. For another, he graphically terms it an appeal to "the *eye* of Hearing"; and nothing could be more eloquent than his apostrophe addressed to poets: "The Ear is no child; 'tis a staunch and loving woman. So come to it with all your hearts, and eye to eye; offer it your countenance, the visage of the word; not its flabby hinder side, which ye trail behind you in the end-rhyme of your prosaic talk, and try to palm upon the ear—just as if the payment of that childish tinkle, which one offers as a sop to savages and fools, would earn your words unhindered

* Striking examples will be found in the hurry of the six-times repeated rhythm of Wotan's "gegen ihn doch hast du gewollt," etc., contrasted with the lingering motion of his farewell words "des Lebewohles letztem Kuss" (*Walküre* iii).

entrance through the aural gateway to the brain. Draw nigh this glorious sense, ye poets! But draw nigh it as entire men, in perfect trust! Give it the amplest ye can ever compass; and what your Understanding nevermore can bind, this sense will bind it up for you, and give it back as an unending whole." That "visage of the word" is matchless as a metaphor, yet there must always remain the fear that stabreim itself, just like end-rhyme, may become what a minor English poet has called it, an "artful aid," a trick to be mastered by the merest poetaster; and that may have been among the experiences that made our author fall away from it in after years. Even now he recognises that this Consonantal aid is secondary in rank to musical Tone; for the very next paragraph observes, "And how little as yet have we offered this Ear, with our mere bringing it the consonantal Stabreim; albeit that alone has opened up to us an understanding of all speech." From the consonant he proceeds to the Vowel, "the whole inner organism of man . . . his heart the *open sound*." Here we no longer are dealing with "the eye of Hearing," that faculty which gives it a sense of similarity between the consonantal garment and the *external* qualities of an object; the ordering of his vowels is so subtle a gift of the poet's, that even in common parlance we attribute it to a musical ear. For that no verbal rules can be laid down. "All vowels are primarily akin," like the separate notes of a musical key; "they are nothing in themselves but *tones condensed*." But raise them into actual *musical* tones, and their "full *emotional* content" is at once revealed. So we reach at last the limit of the Poet's technique: it has been followed to the minutest particle of speech; from this vanishing point the Musician must make his start.

With Chapter 3 begins that upward curve: "The characteristic distinction between *Word-poet* and *Tone-poet* consists in this: the Word-poet has concentrated an infinitude of scattered moments of action, sensation and expression—only cognisable by the Understanding—to a point the most accessible to Feeling; now comes the Tone-poet, and expands this concentrated, compact point to the utmost fulness of its emotional-content." That process of "expansion" forms the subject of this and the next three chapters of *Opera and Drama*. Siegfried has filed down the fragments of the broken sword, which none of Mime's patching could ever glue together; he next proceeds to gather up the

filings, and place them in a crucible, for fire to fuse: "The Understanding loosens, the Feeling binds to one harmonious whole. This unitarian Expression the poet wins at last in the ascent of his word-verse into the melody of Song; and the latter wins *its* unitarian Expression, its unfailing impress on the Feeling, through the instinctive sense of an affinity among its tones." We have already seen the Word-poet "striving for unity of expression" by his choice of words with similar initial consonants; but he had no power of grouping into obvious families the most vital elements of articulate sound. Now, however, "From the instant of the musical intonation of the vowel, the Feeling has become the appointed orderer of all further utterance to the senses, and henceforth Musical feeling [the musical ear] alone prescribes the choice and application both of lesser and of chiefer tones; and that according to the Key selected to give the due emotional expression to the phrase." Thus the Word-poet, with his accented speech-roots, had prescribed the *rhythm* of the "word-verse melody"; the Tone-poet ordains what Wagner aptly terms its "horizontal *harmony*."

Let not the reader grow alarmed lest, having given him a full dose of what we may call the *ars poetica* of Wagnerian Drama, I should propose to put him through the goose-step of 'Harmony and Thorough-bass.' With such our author has no concern; they are schoolroom lessons, and he has no ambition to set up a conservatoire. What does concern him, may be styled the Applied Psychology of his twofold art. "The Stabreim had already knit up speech-roots of opposite emotional import, such as 'Lust und Leid,' 'Wohl und Weh,' and thus presented them to the Feeling as generically akin. In far higher measure can musical Modulation make such a union patent to the Feeling." We then are given a triplet of instructive illustrations: the first being a line such as "*Liebe giebt Lust zum Leben*," where, the emotion being homogeneous, the musical notes would of course be confined to one key; the second is that of "a verse of mixed emotion, such as '*die Liebe bringt Lust und Leid*,'" where the word "*Lust*" would naturally be given a tone conducting to another key, or mode, appropriate to the "*Leid*"; finally, we have a pendant to the second example, a line to follow with "*doch in ihr Weh auch webt sie Wonnen*," where "*webt*" would lead us back to the original key for the "*Wonnen*," thus

"definitely stamping the two emotions as of one and the same class — a thing impossible to the word-poet, who had been obliged to change the root-initial for his Stabreim." Here we get the unit of expression, "the poetico-musical *period*, dominated by one chief-key," though with an excursion into another. That Period, however, may be of the most varied length and complexity, according to the character of the thing to be expressed, or in other words, the "dramatic situation"; the adduced examples having been chosen of the most elementary simplicity for sake of clearness.—And here we may pause a moment, to ask all critics of the older school whether they really cannot trace in this a Form as far superior to the old mathematical regularity, as the human figure to that of a crystal?

But the Musician's work has merely begun. In Chapter 4 we arrive at the clothing of this skeleton "word-verse melody," or rather, the conferring upon it of its third dimension. So far, we may be said to have but length and breadth, in the word-verse and its "horizontal" harmony—in other words, its melody. To gain solidity we require also depth, the "vertical" dimension, i.e. "*concurrent* Harmony." Whence are we to obtain it? Not from the usual operatic trick of employing minor characters to sound harmonic chords to the tenor's or soprano's solo: nothing so banal and undramatic as that. "Not the so-called *Chorus*,* nor the main characters themselves, are to be used by the poet as a symphonic enunciator of the Harmonic conditions of the melody. Only in the full tide of lyric outpour, when all the acting characters and their Surrounding have been strictly led up to a joint expression of feeling, is there offered to the tone-poet a polyphonic mass of voices to which he may commit the declaration of the harmony." The proper organ "to make plain the harmony" is the Orchestra, "which further possesses the power of characterising the melody in a way entirely barred to the symphonising vocal mass." But that places us in a dilemma—for the moment. The ear of Richard Wagner is unusually sensitive, and cannot allow two factors so different in *timbre*, as the musical instrument and the human voice, to unite in the attempt to form a chord; the Orchestra must be a distinct and

* A passage so often misconstrued into a decree of unconditional banishment.

independent element, revealing the harmony (i.e. exhibiting and emphasising the nature of the key) more in the manner of Counterpoint, and "carrying the Verse-melody as the lake the pinnace"—a very fine simile being introduced in default of a practical illustration.* Meanwhile we have had a suggestive comparison of the timbre of various groups of instruments to the distinctive garb the consonants of human speech confer upon the vowel—taking us a long way into the secret of Wagner's own orchestration: "In its determinant influence on the quality of tone, a musical instrument would thus play the part of a consonantal Stabreim to all the notes executable upon it." So we have an Orchestra, not merely exponent of the "naked harmony," but endowed, in a sense, with "individual powers of speech." And now we are equipped with all our implements: not only has the sword been forged anew, but the spear has had its runes carved on it.

In Chapter 5, unrivalled by any other précis of Wagner's own procedure, we are told the *kind* of things the Orchestra can speak. Its faculty is that of "uttering the *unspeakable*. . . . As pure organ of Feeling, it speaks out the very things that Word-speech in itself, the organ of the Understanding, can *not*." For one thing, there is Gesture—that "other unspeakable"—to be given an interpreter to the ear, in addition to its appeal to the eye; for "at the mouth of two witnesses shall the whole matter be first established." Now, "just as the word-verse intensifies itself to Melody, so it necessarily requires an intensification of the gestures which it prompts, beyond the measure of those accompanying ordinary Talk. . . . Wherefore the dramatic-aim prescribes the stature, mien, bearing, motion and dress of the performer, down to their tiniest detail"; and from "Gesture it demands a force, diversity, a finesse and mobility, such as Drama alone can necessitate." This "heightened" Gesture must be matched, made manifest and still more eloquent, by its doubling with

* *Prose Works* II. 314. A few pages earlier (300-1) occurs that well-known comparison of the Poet and Musician to two travellers starting on their journey round the globe in opposite directions; on their second re-encounter "they part no more, for both now *know* the Earth. They have become One; for each now knows and feels what the other feels and knows. The Poet has become musician, the Musician poet: the *pair* now form an entire artist-man."

music: "The farther Gesture departs from her most definite, but most straitened basis, that of the dance"—which had been the originator of *musical* rhythm; "the more sparingly she distributes her sharpest accents, in the most manifold and delicate expressional nuances to attain an endless aptitude for speech: so much the more manifold and delicate become the tone-figures of Instrumental speech; which, convincingly to impart the Unspeakable of the gesture, now wins a melodic Expression immeasurable in its wealth of idiom." So that "Gesture *and* Orchestral-melody, together, at last form as intelligible a whole as Word-Tone-melody forms for its part."*

Besides the eloquence it lends to Gesture, the Orchestra may become a vital factor in the exposition of the poet's aim: "The language of the orchestra, moreover, is able to attach itself just as intimately to the verse-melody as to the gesture, and thus to develop into a messenger of the very *thought* itself, transmitting it to Feeling." This being one of the salient features of Wagnerian Drama, and, in the logic and thoroughgoingness of its application, a wholly new device, I must quote at somewhat greater length:—

When the emotion that forms the subject of a line of verse has clothed itself in a sufficiently distinctive melodic theme, "it has become the property of pure Music"—to put it a little more clearly, that particular group or combination of tones has become as much identified in our minds with the sentiment expressed, providing we are quick of ear, as the sounds of the word "anger"

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* As Wagner often is easier to understand in his private letters, than when haunted by the shadow of the critical reviewer, we may be assisted by a passage from one to Liszt of Sept. 8, 1850. The illustration also found its way into the closing chapter of *Opera and Drama*, three or four months later, but with nothing like the force and lucidity of its private setting:—"Not a bar of dramatic music is justified unless it expresses something bearing on the action or the character of its transactors. That clarinet reminiscence after the duet in the second act of *Tannhäuser* is not there for its own sake, for sake of a musical effect, which Elisabeth has simply to accompany at a pinch,—but the greeting waved by Elisabeth is the main affair I had in view, and that reminiscence was simply selected by me to accompany *this action* of Elisabeth's appropriately. What a lamentable inversion of the relation between music and representation is that, when—as in the said example—the *main thing* (i.e. the dramatic motive) is left out, and the *secondary thing* (the musical accompaniment of that motive) alone remains!"

with that passion itself. "Such a melody, once imparted to us by the actor as the vehicle of an emotion, and now expressively repeated by the orchestra at an instant when the person represented merely nurses that emotion in his memory,—such a melody materialises for us this personage's Thought. Nay, even when the present speaker appears no longer conscious of that emotion, its characteristic sounding by the orchestra is able to stir within us an emotion which—in its filling-out of a conjuncture, its clearing-up of a situation, through suggesting motives that are inherent enough therein, but cannot come to light within its representable moments—for us becomes a *thought*, yet in itself is *more* than Thought, for it is the thought's *Emotional-content* called back from the past.* . . . Music cannot think: but she can materialise thoughts, i.e. she can give forth their emotional substance as no longer merely recollected, but made present. This she can do, however, only when her own manifestment is conditioned by a Poetic aim; and when this latter, again, has been clearly set forth in the first place by the organ of the Understanding, namely Word-speech. A musical Motive can produce a definite impression on the Feeling, inciting it to a function akin to Thought, only when the emotion expressed in that musical-motive has been definitely conditioned by a definite object, and proclaimed by a definite individual before our very eyes. . . . With the return of such a musical motive, a *definite* emotion is sensibly conveyed to us through the agency of the orchestra, albeit now unspoken by the performer. Wherefore the concurrent sounding of such a motive unites for us the conditioning, the non-present emotion with the emotion thereby-conditioned and at this instant finding voice." Though the phraseology is somewhat crabbed, no more lucid exposition of what the whole musical world now understands by the term "Leitmotiv" has ever been submitted to us; we have merely to extend this definition so as to cover not only gesture and emotion, but at times a concrete object such as the Sword, the Spear, the Ring, the Tarnhelm, and so forth—or rather, the forces those objects symbolise—and we have the whole mature Wagnerian scheme. And it works backwards, too: the *poet* thus is enabled immensely to simplify his sentences, for the

* *Prose Works* II. 328. All these italics exist in the original German.

musical accompaniment can now supply a commentary that weaves itself around the text without retarding it an instant.

Yet another problem has at the same time been solved; that Programme-music touched on in Part I., or as Wagner here calls it, Tone-painting. The "absolute Instrumental composer" had already endeavoured to make his music tell a tale, or describe a landscape: like Shakespeare, however—without the actual *scene*—"he could only appeal to the Phantasy, and ultimately must feel compelled to make the object of description plain by giving it an extramusical label. So-called Tone-painting is the manifest finis of our absolute Instrumental music's evolution. In it this art has perceptibly chilled down its own expression, no longer addressing itself to Feeling, but to Fancy: an experience which anyone may make for himself by hearing a Mendelssohnian, or still more a Berliozian, orchestral composition on top of a tone-piece by Beethoven. Nevertheless, it is not to be denied that this evolutionary course was a necessary one, and the definite veering off into tone-painting was prompted by sincerer motives than, for instance, the return to the fugal style of Bach. Above all, it must not be forgotten that the sensuous power of Instrumental-speech has thereby been uncommonly enriched and heightened." Every road has been leading to Rome; for "it is precisely such moments from the life of Nature or Man, to whose delineation the Musician has hitherto felt drawn, that the Poet now needs in preparation for weighty dramatic developments." We thus arrive at the Orchestra's third chief function: "Where gesture lapses into total rest, and the melodic discourse of the actor wholly ceases—i.e. where the drama prepares its future course from moods as yet unuttered,—there these as yet unspoken moods may be given voice by the Orchestra in such a way that their utterance shall bear the character of a *foreboding*." In the hush of expectation the hearer's mind is finely compared to "a well-tuned harp, whose strings are sounding to the touch of passing winds, and wait the player who shall grasp them into shapely chords." And "no language is capable of so *movingly* expressing a preparatory Repose, as that of the Orchestra: to develop this repose into an impatient longing, is its most peculiar office.* What is offered our eye by a

* Witness the "Waldweben" in *Siegfried*, or in fact the prelude to *Lohengrin*.

scene from Nature or a still and silent human figure, and through that eye attunes us to a placid contemplation, this same thing Music can present to our emotions in such a way that, starting from Repose, she moves them to a state of strained Expectancy, and thus awakes the longing which the poet needs on our part to assist him in the revelation of his aim. . . . Thus heralded, the actual appearance steps before us as a longing fulfilled, a justified foreboding."

At last we have all the factors of Expression at command; not merely as raw, but as highly-wrought material. In Chapter 6 we are to be shewn "*how* they must be knit together, to answer as a single Form to the single Substance; for only through the possibility of this oneness of Form, can the Substance also shape itself as *one*." Now, the clearness of this particular chapter has suffered much from two several causes, the one being want of revision, the other the unfortunate receipt by Wagner of a present from Feuerbach, consisting of all that terribly syllogistic writer's works. Moreover, it would almost seem as if certain notes originally intended for Part II. had slipped their moorings and drifted hither for lack of better steering. For example, we certainly did not expect to be suddenly taken back to the *poet's* first task, namely the laying-out of his dramatic groundplan, such as: "The poet therefore has to shew us his characters at first in predicaments having a recognisable likeness with those in which we have, or at least might have, found ourselves. Only from such a basis can he mount step by step to the construction of situations whose force and wondrousness shall remove us from the life of everyday and shew us Man in the highest fulness of his power." But it is easier to criticise, than to create; and perhaps it is only the joinery that is at fault, after all, owing to that want of revision. For it is our author's explicit desire to shew that the very means of Expression, being "raised above the language of our daily life," have provided the poet with "a heightened standpoint for the reaching of his Aim," and that means and end thus mutually justify each other.

The question of perfect harmony between Form and Substance is a most important one, as upon its answer depends that "Unity" which so long has vexed the minds of dramaturgists. We must therefore exercise a little patience when we come across so remorseless a passage as the following:—"*Unity of artistic*

Form is only conceivable as the enunciation of a united Content: a united Content, however, is recognisable as such only through its taking an artistic *Expression* whereby it can enounce itself *entirely* to the Feeling. A Content requiring a twofold Expression, i.e. a mode of expression that obliged the messenger to address himself alternately to the Understanding and the Feeling, —such a content could only be itself a dual, a discordant one.— Every artistic aim makes primarily for a unitarian Shape; for only in degree as an enunciation approaches such a shape, does it at all become an artistic one: but it necessarily begins to cleave in two, from the instant when the Expression placed at its disposal no longer can entirely impart it. Since it is the instinctive will of every artistic Aim to impart itself to Feeling, it follows that the Expression which cleaves it is one incompetent entirely to rouse the Feeling: but an expression must entirely rouse the Feeling, if it would entirely impart thereto its content." In terms of the above we next are given the reason why restriction to unintoned speech was such a drawback to the poet (a drawback discussed by Goethe and Schiller in their correspondence, as Wagner himself observes in later years): "Owing to his inadequate means of Expression, the poet was obliged to split his Content into an emotional and an intellectual one, and thus to leave the kindled Feeling in a state of restless discontent." On the other hand, the Absolute musician "no less constrained the Understanding to seek for some lurking Content, in this Expression of his which so completely stirred the Feeling, yet brought it no appeasement. . . . In the larger work of absolute Instrumental music—the Symphony—alternation, repetition, augmentation and diminution of the themes made out the movement of its separate section, which strove for Unity of Form through the co-ordination and recurrence of its themes. The vindication of their recurrence, however, rested on a mere imagined, never realised assumption," it being a pure question of caprice or convention. In that bastard, Modern Opera, on the contrary, "the musician has never so much as attempted to devise a unitarian Form for the whole work; each several vocal number was a form replete in itself, and merely hung together with the other numbers of the opera through a similarity of outward structure. The Disconnected was so peculiarly the character of operatic music."

With the last paragraph I have departed a little from the

order in which our author sets his argument before us; but it seemed better to shew in advance exactly what he is driving at. We now can follow him without a break through his personal recipe for attaining the desired "unity of form": *—To begin with, "The orchestra gives voice to the expectancy that possesses us before the appearing of the artwork" (e.g. the prelude to *Die Walküre*). "When the poet leads the object of this expectancy upon the scene as a personage of his drama, he would simply affront and disillusion the kindled Feeling, were he to allow that personage to express itself in a tongue suddenly recalling the most banal accents of the life whence we have just been transported. That personage, too, must pronounce itself in that tongue which already has roused our emotion, to correspond at all with what this emotion has been led to expect." Therefore, as laid down at the close of Part II., "Tone-speech is to be struck into from the outset. . . . Unnatural would the poet's figures seem, if, for all the intensification of their motives and moments-of-action, they enounced them through the organ of ordinary life; unintelligible moreover, and positively ridiculous, if they employed this organ by turns with that heightened one,—as much as though they exchanged from time to time the soil of daily life, before our very eyes, for that heightened soil of the poetic Art-work." Yet our sympathy can never be extended to the poet's characters, if they speak a language we cannot *understand*, or the words of which are drowned in a cascade of music: "The Wondrous of his dramatic individualities and situations the poet will develop in exact degree as a fit Expression stands at his behest,—namely, as the language of the impersonator, after accurately laying down the basis of the Situation as one borrowed from human Life and intelligible thereto, can lift itself from already tonal Word-speech into actual Tone-speech; from which there blooms at last the Melody, as revelation of the purely-

* We may call it a *personal* recipe, since at the beginning of Chapter 7 (in this same Part III.) Wagner expressly says: "Whoever may have understood me to be desirous of setting up an arbitrary canon, according to which all poets and musicians should work in future, has wilfully misunderstood me"; whilst in the chapter with which we now are dealing, he says, "The Drama is a thing forever new, and ever shaping itself anew, since it takes its subjects from the endless variations of a measurelessly complex life, and therefore brings the poet ever new necessities to realise" (condensed from *P.* II. 342).

human emotional essence of an individuality or situation." Hard words, but easily to be understood if we consider the advance in act i of *Die Walküre* from Siegmund's first ejaculation to his song of Spring and Love.

But how is the drama to be maintained at one *emotional* level, while the necessary explanations are being supplied to the intellect? We have seen how chilling is the effect of such explanations when entrusted to mere Recitative, with its poor little chord strewn here and there, even in the opening scene of *Lohengrin*. The new function of the Orchestra removes that chill: "Wherever the word-tone language of the dramatis personæ sinks so far down as to expose its closest kinship with the mode of daily life—with the organ of the Understanding—there the orchestra makes good this sunk expression through its power of musically conveying a Foreboding or Remembrance; so that the kindled Feeling remains in its uplifted mood, and never has to follow on that downward path. . . . Let us not forget, however, that this equalising function of the orchestra's is never to be ordered *by the musician's caprice*, but *solely by the poet's aim*. A mere absolute-musical embellishment of drooping or inchoate situations —a favourite Operatic device for the self-glorification of Music, exemplified in 'ritornels' and interludes, and even in the song-accompaniments,—such a trick destroys at once all unity, and casts the interest of the ear on Music no longer as a means of expression, but as herself the thing expressed." And here is the point so often forgotten by the imitators: "We ought never to hear these prophetic or reminiscent melodic-moments, except when we can feel that they are complementary to the utterance of the character upon the stage, who either will not or cannot just now divulge to us his full emotion"—which we may amplify by adding, "or his full intention," since *Empfindung* is a word of rather wider meaning than "emotion."

Wagner himself does not call these "melodic moments" *Leitmotiven*, though the origin of that very felicitous term may distinctly be traced to the following: "These Melodic Moments, in themselves adapted to maintain our Feeling at an even height, will be made by the orchestra into a kind of guides-to-Feeling through the whole labyrinthine building of the drama." But mark this: they "will necessarily have blossomed only from the *weightiest motives* of the drama, the concentrated, strengthened

root-motives of a strengthened and concentrated Action, the *pillars* of the dramatic edifice; which pillars the poet employs, on principle, in no bewildering multitude, but marshals in a number small enough to allow of easy survey." Here our author appears to have his eye more on the past, than the future: to *Lohengrin* the restriction would obviously apply; but when it came to the actual music of the *Ring*, his inspiration leapt all predetermined bounds, and lit on a fund of 'musical motives' by no means "small in number." That, however, is a detail.

We have at last arrived at the only thing to make dramatic unity possible, namely a "perfect unitarian form." For "these Chief-motives of the Dramatic Action—having become differentiable Melodic Moments — now mould themselves into a continuous artistic form, which stretches not merely over fragments of the drama, but over its whole." This is the true tale of that ridiculous myth of a "continuous melody" over which the precipitate critic has so often come to grief, borrowing the expression from Wagner's article on so-called "*Zukunftsmusik*" (a much condensed and simpler exposition of the subject, written 1860), but foolishly applying it to the *vocal* part through almost wilful blindness to the fact that, here as there, it exclusively refers to the orchestra. The actual term is not once used in *Opera and Drama*, merely "continuity of *form*"; in the *Zukunftsmusik*, on the other hand, it is first introduced in description of Beethoven's method of dealing with a Symphonic Movement: "The quite new result of this procedure was to expand the melody, through richest evolution of all its included motives, to one vast piece of music, which in itself was strictly nothing but one sole continuous melody" (*eine einzige, genau zusammenhängende Melodie*—G. Schr. vii, 169). A couple of pages later in that *Zukunftsmusik* the poet is supposed to address the musician, "Stretch boldly out your melody, that like a ceaseless river it may pour itself through all the work. In it say you what I keep silent, since you alone can say it; and silent shall I utter all, since my hand it is that guides you" (*P.* III. 337). To this is appended the comment, "In truth a poet's greatness is mostly to be measured by what he leaves unsaid, to let us breathe in silence to ourselves the thing unspeakable; the musician it is, who brings this thing untold to clarion tongue, and his sounding silence takes the infallible form of *endless melody*" (*ibid.* 338)—all possibility of misinterpretation

being removed by the directly-sequent sentence, which tells us that "necessarily the symphonist," i.e. the dramatic musician who adopts this *symphonic* method, "will not be able to shape this melody without his own peculiar implement, the *orchestra*." Wherefore it is no question of the singer's being given some shapeless and interminable stretch of notes, to be dignified by the name of "continuous melody," as against the old balanced form with closes and half-closes—the Aria form—but of the melodic interest being carried by the orchestra into every cranny of the work, and always with a definite and consistent meaning; so that each act, in fact the whole drama, becomes an undivided whole, according to that beautiful simile of "the one great forest-melody" which rounds off the exposition in the "Zukunftsmusik" (*ibid.* 339-40).

Returning to *Opera and Drama*, the object of all these technical chapters is finally summed up in a sentence which, however painfully abstract, contains the quintessence of Wagner's musico-dramatic theory: "The most perfect Unity of artistic Form is that in which a widest conjuncture of the phenomena of Human Life—as Content—can impart itself to the Feeling in so completely intelligible an Expression, that in its every moment this Content shall completely stir, and alike completely satisfy, the Feeling."

With Chapter 7 we reach the end of this remarkable work, preluded by the disclaimer: "The New that I may haply have said, is nothing other than the Unconscious in the nature of the thing, that has become conscious to me, as a thinking artist, simply because I have grasped in its cohesion what artists heretofore have taken only in its severance." The whole technical scheme has now been set before us, a scheme of which its author tells us in that aforesaid *Zukunftsmusik*, "Even my boldest conclusions as to the attainable dramatico-musical form were thrust upon me through my carrying at like time in my head the plan for my Nibelungen-drama, a portion of which I already had turned into verse; and there I was maturing that drama in such a fashion, that my theory was little more than an abstract exposition of the productive process going on within me" (*P.* III. 326). But there are a few more general considerations to present themselves, now that the "thinking artist" can emerge from his "private meditations" (*ibid.* 309) and survey the field of their practical realisation.

In the first place, the relation between poet and musician.

Deferring awhile the question as to whether these "should be *two* persons, or *one*," we find the musician warned that "every, even the tiniest moment of his Expression *in which the poetic aim is not contained*, and which is not strictly conditioned by that Aim and its realisation,—every such moment is superfluous, disturbing, bad"; whilst the poet is informed that, "if his Aim—in so far as it is to be displayed to the ear—*cannot be entirely realised in the Expression of his musician ally*, neither is it a highest Poetic aim at all," Voltaire's well-known maxim being transmuted into, "What is not worth the being sung, neither is it worth the poet's telling."

Then comes what we may regard as a justification of the subtitle, "The Drama of the Future." What possibility offered itself, of this Drama's being brought to actual life on the stage of the present? Alas! the prospect was a dismal one, as we have seen even with the *Lohengrin* experience, and as we are reminded in *Zukunftsmusik:* "If the tendencies of Theatre and Poet are radically divergent, it is easy to imagine the distress of the artist who sees himself constrained to employ an art-organ originally belonging to quite another aim than his" (*P.* III. 297). Where should he find the performers? Of the three chief languages employed in Opera, Italian, French and German, only the last-named had retained the accent on the vital part of speech, the root; yet German singers, ruined by their repertory's consisting for the major part of badly-*translated* operas, had lost all faculty for articulate utterance, and cared for nothing save the notes that best shew off their voice. "Now, were this word-verse melody cut loose from its prime conditions—as our singers would loose it from the speaking-verse,—it would stay quite unintelligible and unimpressive. . . . A drama couched in this Word-Tone speech, but executed by our speechless singers, could make nothing but a purely-musical impression upon its hearers," who would simply vote the whole musical edifice "a ragged, piecemeal, nondescript chaos, the caprice of a fantastic, incompetent and puzzle-brained musician"; since the constant recurrence of certain musical themes would convey no meaning to them, in the absence of the words to which those themes should have been wed at their first appearance. As for their *gestures*, the poor souls have merely been taught conventional rules, to mask the physical distortion caused by the exertion of bawling; at their 'number's'

end they deem themselves dispensed from service for the nonce, the customary orchestral intervals being "filled according to certain standing rules of stage-decorum—provided the singer be not too busy bowing thanks for reaped applause. One walks to the other side of the proscenium, or passes to the back—as though to see if anybody's coming; then steps to the front again, and casts one's eyes toward heaven. It is considered less seemly in such pauses, though allowable in a dilemma, to lean over to one's partners, engage them in polite conversation, arrange the folds of one's dress, or finally, do just nothing at all but patiently wait till the orchestral clouds have rolled by." And as for that orchestra, which was to have given emphasis to gesture and meaning to repose, the public would turn its whole attention to "the fillip of an extremely changeable and variegated *instrumentation*"—as in fact had been done by some of the critics of the Weimar *Lohengrin*. Yet, "to be true to our aim, such an attention is absolutely *not* to be devoted to it. Through its everywhere adapting itself to the finest shade of individuality in the Dramatic Motive, the orchestra is irresistibly to guide our attention *away from itself* as *means of expression*, and direct it to *the subject expressed*. So that the very richest dialect of the Orchestra is to be deployed with the artistic object of not being noticed, in a manner of speaking, of *not being heard at all:* to wit, not heard in its *mechanical*, but solely in its *organic* capacity, wherein it is one with the drama."

Of the bandsmen themselves Wagner has no fear; at present they form his solitary ray of hope. But the other side of the footlights and orchestra-lamps there sits the many-headed audience: what of that? Supposing a magician had conjured up for us performers of artistic insight, "for the first time we should become keenly aware that we lacked the real enabler of the artwork, a Public to feel the need of it. The public of our theatres has no *need* for Art-work; it wants to *distract* itself, before the stage, not to *collect* itself; and the Need of the seeker after distraction is merely for artificial *details*, not for an artistic *unity*. Where we gave it a whole, the public would be blindly driven to tear that whole to disconnected fragments," for "the rulership of public taste in Art has passed to the person who pays the artist's wage and insists on ever novel variations of his one beloved theme, but at no price a new theme itself. This ruler and ordainer is—*the Philistine*, the most heartless offspring of our Civilisation, the

foulest and most domineering of Art's bread-givers." Even this purse-proud Philistine, however, is a product of conditions, and the artist (the author) still looks for the advent of that "earthquake which shall tear apart the silt, and ready for the stream [of a humaner life] that bed in which we soon shall even *see* its living waters flow."

But it requires uncommon courage, to build beforehand for a future so uncertain in its date; and that brings us back to the question, whether the Poet and Musician of this Drama can be as yet (the middle of last century) two men, or one? "If we consider the present attitude assumed by Poet and Musician toward each other, and find it ordered by the selfsame maxims of egoistic severance as those which govern all the factors of our modern social State, we certainly can but feel that, in an unworthy public system where every man is bent on shining for himself alone, *there* none but the individual Unit can take into himself the spirit of Community, and cherish and develop it according to his powers—how inadequate soe'er they be. Not to *two*, at the hour that is, can come the thought of jointly making possible the Perfect Drama; for, parleying on this thought, the two must necessarily and candidly avow the impossibility of its realisement in face of Public Life; and that avowal would nip their undertaking in the bud. Only the solitary can change the bitterness of such a self-avowal to an intoxicating joy which drives him on, with all the courage of a drunkard, to pave the way for the Impossible. For he, *alone*, is urged by *two* artistic forces he cannot withstand; by forces which he willingly lets drive him to self-offering."

It is the same heart-cry that was torn from the author just ten years back in Paris, with that priceless *Artist and Publicity*—which he perhaps had recently read over for a proposed republication (p. 63 *antea*). And *torn* from him it is; for a footnote promptly apologises for having in this one instance "made express mention" of himself, and disclaims all idea that he "had already brought to pass this Drama." With the last sentence of that footnote I may fitly close this long, yet all too brief review: "Not of my achievements, but of what they thus have brought within my consciousness that I now can utter it with full conviction, am I proud."

Nine years afterwards Wagner refers to the "fatigue" that had

come over him when writing *Opera and Drama*, a fatigue which "so sorely weighed upon his brain" that he calls it an "abnormal state" of mind. "Nothing can be more alien and distressing to the artist's nature, than such a course of thought. He therefore does not surrender himself to it with the needful coolness, the property of the theorist by profession; rather is he thrust on by a passionate impatience, which prevents his devoting the requisite time to a careful handling of style; he fain would give in every sentence a complete picture of his subject; doubt as to whether he has succeeded in this, drives him to constant renewal of the attempt—which fills him at last with a heat and irritation that should be entire strangers to the theorist. Then he grows alive to all these faults and evils, and, freshly harassed by his feeling of them, he hurriedly ends his work with a sigh that, after all, he will probably be understood by none save those who share his views already" (*P.* III. 321).

Four to five months were indeed too short a time to devote to a work of such originality and magnitude; too short, to ensure it against occasional obscurities; too short for the author's own health. But the "sigh" with which the work was ended came also from a deeper region: "The last pages of this copy I have written in a mood I can intelligibly describe to no one," he cries to Uhlig in February 1851. "Candidly speaking, my only wish is to get the hateful manuscript out of the house." His *Opera and Drama*, the harvest of a lifetime of experience and thought, has become to him a self-reproach; it has been instrumental in the death of a domestic pet. At one flash the man's great tender heart is bared to us. "Our parrot, the most lovable of creatures, that loved me so prettily, the little talking, singing, whistling spirit of my modest little home—had often been poorly of late; I was to fetch a veterinary—but it would always get better that instant: my work was chaining me to a diligence that set everything else on one side. On the day before the finish of my copying-out, the good beast so longed to leave its cage to come to me, that my wife could resist it no longer, and brought it out to my writing-table. It wanted to perch where the sun shone in through the window,—I drew the curtains, to be able to work; it became a general disturbance to me, and my wife had to take it away:—then it gave a doleful cry I knew so well. Afterwards came word, perhaps I had really better fetch the doctor: Oh!

it will be nothing particular—I said—and thought to myself, To-morrow you'll have finished your work, and that will be time enough to go.—Next morning it suddenly—died!—Ah! if I could tell you what has passed away for me, with this tiny creature!!—It's quite indifferent to me, whether I'm laughed at for it: what I feel, I feel, and I've lost all wish to put a check upon my feelings. For those who might choose to laugh at me, I should have to write whole books—to make them understand what a little creature like this can be and become to a man who is *confined to phantasy* for everything. Three days have gone,—and still nothing can comfort me:—and it's the same with my wife:—the bird was something natural between us and to us." What a cry from a prosaic, childless home!

This little domestic tragedy has so unhinged him that he cannot breathe a word, at present, of his customary joy at having completed an important labour. All his interest in the "hateful manuscript" has departed for the moment, save as an instrument for gaining "a little money—for after all I'm still alive." So Uhlig is requested to send the work on offer to J. J. Weber, of Leipzig, who had already published Eduard Devrient's books, done good business with Laube's plays, and been thought of by Liszt for publication of his *Lohengrin* essay—as we learn in a previous letter to Uhlig. As a corrective to the strain of melancholy, we may quote from that previous letter a bon-mot upon publishers' 'conscience.' An illustrated Calendar of J. J. Weber's had fallen by chance into Wagner's hands; he is horrified to find that the man is in the thick of Reaction; would it be seemly even to offer him a work "radically directed against the State?"—but friends have reassured him, that "one really need attach no weight to the sentiments of a book-dealer."

J. J. Weber is not his only chance, however; he has another possible string to his bow. Friend Kolatschek,* editor of the short-

* Dr Adolf Kolatschek, born at Bielitz in 1821; lately a member of the Frankfort National Assembly. With the Frankfort Parliament he moved to Stuttgart; in danger of being handed over by Wurtemberg to Austria, he fled to Switzerland; and his name is frequently mentioned in the letters of Wagner's early Zurich period. Another literary member of Wagner's intimate circle was Reinhold Solger, whose contributions to Kolatschek's *Monatsschrift*, though fairly original in matter and observation, are terribly larded with Feuerbachian dialectics.

lived *Deutsche Monatsschrift*, had offered to induce his own publisher to accept the manuscript of *Opera and Drama*, in which event certain sections of the book would have to make preliminary appearance in the *Monatsschrift* itself. The sections duly appeared there in March and May 1851,* but arrangements had meantime been entered into with J. J. Weber. Not without tiresome beating from pillar to post; for Wagner naturally wanted to get the best payment he could for "four months' incessant toil." The figure he had contemplated was a modest "60 louis d'or," about £48: Weber offers him a miserable hundred thalers, just £15. Necessity was about to force Wagner into consenting to the sordid bargain, when his brother-in-law Avenarius, whose advice he had already asked, came forward with the offer of a like sum to be supplemented by an additional 75 thlr after sale of the first four-hundred copies. This pricks Weber to open his fist a fraction wider, and Wagner finally closes with him for 20 louis d'or down, the dose to be repeated after the edition of five-hundred copies should have been sold out—in an English Review of good standing he would have received at least twice as much for the portion contributed to the *Monatsschrift* alone. No wonder he shudders at the thought, "if I had to support myself by my writings!"—but luckily Frau Ritter has just sent him another donation.

To complete the history of *Opera and Drama*, we must look just a little ahead. Not till the beginning of May, was the bargain with J. J. Weber clinched: "How the whole thing has dragged!" June 3, "I have just received 4 sheets of proof from Weber: to my astonishment I see that he is going to spread the work into three volumes; small octavo and very wide-spaced—for that matter, quite noble—type. Thus will he put up the retail price. O these book-dealers!" Another fortnight finds but little progress made, for Uhlig is told, "My book at Weber's is getting on very slowly." Then comes Uhlig's visit to Switzerland, and we hear no more about the book—save for

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* Whereby they gained the benefit of a double revision, as may be seen upon comparing the magazine with the book. These sections, three in number, comprised the greater portion of Part II., as the most appropriate to a politico-literary journal; they did not, however, embrace the Œdipus-Antigone episode—*vide* pp. 85 *et* 120 *antea*.

an incidental remark in a letter to Liszt of July 11, that "*Oper und Drama* is making very slow progress with its printing, and will probably not be ready for 2 months yet"—till the 8th of September finds the tail of the proof-correcting transferred to Uhlig's shoulders. The master has just been ordered to Albisbrunn for a water-cure and thorough rest, and begs his disciple to relieve him of that clerical care: "There are still about 12 sheets [192 pages] of 'Oper und Drama' to correct. To-day I am writing Weber, to send them *you* together with the manuscript." Which means that by far the greater portion of Part III. (a book of 247 pages in the first edition), of which the fair-copy itself had been made in great haste and mental distraction, had further to suffer from want of emendation by the author during its progress through the press. At last, October 20, Wagner sends Uhlig the simple matter for the title-page, "Oper und Drama, von Richard Wagner"—in striking contrast to the never-ending appellatives and sub-titles beloved by most Germans to this day. By November 28 the printed book has reached its author's hands, and we have an amazing instance of publisher's stinginess: Uhlig has received three copies from Weber, evidently in recognition of his proof-correcting, and Wagner—whose own provision with free copies is manifestly of the scantiest—has to ask for one of them, in order "to get it interleaved in readiness for a—possible—second edition" (which, by the way, was never needed until 1868). Finally, at Christmas the good Uhlig becomes the proud possessor of the manuscript, appropriately bound in "red."

To return to the beginning of 1851. Before the fair-copy of *Opera and Drama* is quite complete, an obituary notice has to be written; on Spontini, who died the 24th of January. The coincidence suggests the reflection, that until yesterday "those three composers who represent the three main tendencies of Opera were all still living: Spontini, Rossini, and Meyerbeer. Spontini was the last link in a chain whose first link is to be found in Gluck." The inditing of the Preface to his great treatise has just brought Meyerbeer back to Wagner's brain: "Indescribable is the repugnance felt by both Spontini and Rossini to the despoiler and confuser of art-tendencies belonging severally to themselves; just as to the genially sans-gêne

Rossini he seemed a hypocrite, so Spontini deemed him a huckster of the most esoteric secrets of creative art. . . . Meyerbeer's successes still are with us, spread over all the opera-world, and give the thinking artist a riddle to rede, in what class of public arts the Opera really should be ranked. But Spontini —is dead, and with him a great, a noble and right honourable art-period has visibly descended to the grave" (*P.* III. 126). In those later reminiscences upon which we already have drawn for our account of the *Vestale* at Dresden, Wagner refers to this article: "The tidings of Spontini's death, which I received at Zurich, touched me very much indeed, for all my strange experiences and recollections. To my feelings and opinion of him I gave brief expression in the *Eidgenössische Zeitung*, laying special stress on the fact that, in contrast to the then-ruling Meyerbeer, and even to the now aged Rossini, he had distinguished himself by a sincere belief in himself and his art" (*ibid.* 142-3).

Soon after the threnody on Spontini the same local paper publishes another article of Wagner's, advocating the cause of friend Semper,* an echo from which we may trace in the "Goethe-Stiftung" letter with its allusion to the Architect as the "poet" of the plastic arts.

With the advent of Spring the depression that had come over Wagner when completing *Opera and Drama* has passed away: "I feel much more cheerful," he writes Uhlig, April 19; "outward circumstances had to help toward that" — these being specified as Frau Ritter's donation, the securing of a publisher, and Liszt's enthusiastic article on *Lohengrin*. The return of good spirits is evident in the buoyancy of a monograph entitled "A Theatre at Zurich," written about the end of March to the middle of April; a little jewel of clear thinking and facile writing, though one hardly ever hears it cited. It may be regarded as a supplement to the last chapter of *Opera and Drama:* the Zurich theatre's past winter-season, with the commencement of which Wagner himself was concerned, had supplied him with much food for thought—for thought a shade outside the province of the larger work—and his fellow-citizens should reap the benefit of it:—

* See Appendix.

How came it that, in a town so flourishing as Zurich, the theatre should always be a prey to hazard? A good director takes the lease, offers the best company he can procure for love or money, and goes empty-handed away; his successor may pare down expenses, and escape with a modest profit, but no glory; a third may leave everything to chance, or the exploitation of a pretty actress and suchlike, "till at last the police give him his marching orders—unless he should first have been called to a post of honour at one of the great Court-theatres" (a neat aside). But the public remains equally indifferent to its town-theatre's fate in all three cases, though it will often attend in quite respectable numbers. Why is it, that it does nothing to ensure the stability of so momentous an undertaking? Evidently the reason is to be found in "a half-conscious doubt whether, even if more substantially supported, a theatre at Zurich could ever yield anything really good."

Such is the thesis, or problem; and it is of far wider interest than might at first appear—especially at a time like the present, when theatres are cropping up like mushrooms in every lesser town and suburb.—"The whole ailment wherewith almost every theatre in Europe is stricken, even unto death, consists in this: with very few exceptions, among which only the first opera-houses of Italy can be included, there is no *original* Theatre save that of Paris, and all the others are but its copies." An echo from that visit to Bordeaux of last spring: "Theatric Paris has become the only genuine productor of our modern dramatic literature. Its productions are first reproduced in the provincial towns of France, already with all the defects of a diminishing originality; but beyond them, all the German theatres subsist almost exclusively on an imitation of the Paris stage." As for the Italian purveyors of "original" products (meaning the Scala and San Carlo), they cater for a public that spends the greater part of the evening on a round of box-visits, and therefore needs a good large dose of "absolutely nothing-saying stopgaps, intended just to make a clatter during the buzz of conversation." The benighted German public is much too serious for that: "Wont to devote its continuous attention to the performance, it receives that nothing-saying noise with the same interest as the principal numbers, or at least with the same attempt at interest; and thus it takes as sterling gold coin what the composer had

wittingly issued as mere pewter tokens. Now, how must we appear to that Italian stranger? Highly ridiculous, to be sure! And that's extremely vexing: for at bottom of our attentive listening to his counterfeits there really lay a laudable artistic sense of good manners."

But, absurd as it was for third-rate German singers to emulate a Grisi or Rubini, it became still worse when minor German theatres dabbled in the Paris speciality, "Grand Opera"; and it was for *that* the local public always clamoured, everywhere. We have heard a good deal about that speciality in *Opera and Drama*, yet nothing quite so apposite as is compressed into these few lines: "Now, this gold-bedizened Grand Opera is a mere husk without a kernel, a florid display of the most sensuous expressional means, without an aim worth expressing. In Paris, where this genre acquired its modern maturation, and whence it is imported to our stage, there has been distilled from all that city's arts of luxury a blinding extract, which has gained at the Grand Opéra a consistence unapproached. . . . The most astounding pomp of scenery and costumes; the most coquettish dancing of the amplest corps-de-ballet in the world; an orchestra of unrivalled strength and excellence, accompanying the dazzling march of prodigious masses of choristers and figurants; between whose ranks at last appear the most expensive singers, schooled expressly for this theatre, to claim the surtaxed senses' residue of interest for their special virtuosity. As pretext for these seductive evolutions, a dramatic aim is also dragged in by the ears—its tantalising motive borrowed from some murderous, or Devil's scandal; and this whole clinking, tinkling, glittering, glistening show is flaunted as 'Grand Opera.'"

Such was the Paris "original." But how about a theatre like that of Zurich *—or Wurzburg, Magdeburg, Riga and the other towns, whose stages Wagner knew so well? "What remains of the intoxicating elixir, when reached down to the thirsting public here? Nothing but the flat and stalely sober dregs." To vary the metaphor: "Of all the gaudy erection nothing is left save its

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* German, or rather a dialect thereof, being the language of this part of Switzerland, the Zurich theatre is classed by Wagner among the minor "German" stages.

framework of laths, which had absolutely no intrinsic object in itself, but was simply there to serve as clothes-prop." Nor is even that so much as given entire: "Inadequate means impose the most appalling cuts and shortenings, and the scenes retained can only appear as unintelligible fragments of an irrecognisable whole." Meyerbeer himself has the author's pity for once, for "Who among my readers can vouch that he has ever understood the plot of *Robert the Devil*, for instance, from its representations in this town?"

Of course the public can take no "inward interest" in such wardrobe-shop finery; so "its outward interest, its money at the doors, has to be attracted through a whetting of its curiosity, its love of motley change . . . and the whole energies of an everlastingly-harried troop of players are accordingly consumed in an exertion entirely profitless to Art." Thus we come to the vital point; "What, then, must be the mutual sentiment between theatre and public? Let us declare it openly: reciprocal contempt!—The public can pay no honour to an art that is never in the position to enthral and satisfy it inwardly. . . . Neither can the performers respect the will and judgment of a public the character of whose interest in the theatre makes impossible their development of aptitudes whereof the practice of their art itself affords them an instinctive consciousness; a public to be purchased by the cheapest claptrap." Wherefore, "just as *to the public* the Theatre is an inwardly-despised purveyor to its wholly superficial craze for entertainment, to that purveyor, in turn, *itself* is but a cynically-cozened object of the most self-seeking speculation."

Yet—and this should be remembered in any estimate of Wagner's attitude towards the Stage—"It is far from any wish of mine, to regard the Theatre as an institute for education of the public. This idea, which has certainly been entertained before, bespeaks an absolute disdain for the public, together with a degrading view of Art itself—which in Drama attains its highest, most peculiar glory." The only sense in which the Theatre could be said to be an educator of the public, would be in that of promoting a taste for what is genuine and earnest, for true Art, not mere sensationalism or frippery. That the germs of such a taste existed, even in a public little used to exercise it, Wagner deemed proved "by the simple experience that in cases where,

through special pains or lucky circumstance,* one succeeded in giving the theatric productions an approximate stamp of perfection, by setting a real artistic end in passable harmony with the means forthcoming—there the public was surprised into betokening a satisfaction that avouched the existence of an inner need within its breast; a need which could not come as yet to common consciousness † only because those cases shewed themselves so very rarely."

In the above we already have an indication of the remedy for that aforesaid disease: it lies in the homely maxim, Cut your coat according to your cloth. "Even the scantiest means are adequate to realise an artistic aim, provided it rule itself for expression through those means, and those means be brought to the highest development of which they are capable." For a minor theatre like that at Zurich, then, the author recommends the citizens in the first place to appoint a committee of ways and means, to which he offers the following practical suggestions:—The company should be small, to admit of procuring better quality for one's limited expenditure; and it should be composed, "not so much of artists already soaked with present stage-routine, but rather of young, still-trainable recruits to the arts of Play and Song." Mindful of his childhood's days, and what had then been done by members of his own family, he advises that "only such persons be engaged who shew both aptitude for acting and a natural disposition for singing," thus obviating alike the cost of maintaining a double company and "the evil influence of a total severance of the stricter art of acting from that of operatic song." The company once formed, it should begin to practise in the summer (with no *public* performances before the winter season), first devoting itself to merely spoken plays, but plays where "the speaking tone need never rise above a pitch allowable, without detriment to their voice, for performers who also are destined to sing"; a higher consideration being, that "plays which contain moments of such passionate vehemence as to put the speaking-organ to

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* The obvious reference is to the beginning of the winter season, when the author himself had taken the most unselfish pains to give the Zurichers good workmanship.

† That "need in common" of which we hear so much in *The Art-work of the Future*.

excessive strain, already overstep the line which should remain drawn round pure play-acting; for beyond that line only the singing-organ, with the powerful assistance of the art of Tone, can bring forth an expression setting passion in the needful light of beauty." Advancing to "the realm of Musical Drama, one should choose for reproduction those existing operas which form the proper link between this genre and spoken comedy. Precisely of this class we possess admirable works, which may certainly rank as the most wholesome and natural of all of Opera's products." What our author has in eye, are more especially the graceful works of the older French school; but so little one-sided does he shew himself, that we can easily imagine him advocating the adoption by a minor theatre of such pieces as Cellier's *Dorothy*, Gilbert and Sullivan's *Mikado*, or Humperdinck's *Hänsel und Gretel*.

As yet, however, the only "originality" displayed by this theatre would have consisted in its restricting itself to works which its stock-company "was really able to *make its own* through an adequate reproduction." The instrument has been fashioned, and brought to some degree of polish; now comes the more difficult question of employing it for its ultimate purpose, namely of "presenting original products, racy of the soil and sprung from moods the public feels with all its soul." Are such beyond hope of procuring? "Are there no artistically creative forces here, in German Switzerland? Unknown they may be, but scarcely non-existent. So often do we pay for coveted acquaintance with celebrities by undeception: were it not a nobler task, to draw the unknown native forces, if not exactly to the glare of idle fame, yet within the warming glow of public love? Shew we them but the way, and how quickly shall we make acquaintance with a native wealth whereof we hitherto had never dreamt! . . . At the very outset, then, a cry must go forth to poets and musicians, from the nearest of blood to the farthest of kin, to furnish works expressly for this theatre; works reckoned alike in general idea, and feasibility of perfect reproduction, for the actual forces of this stage. And the highest result would at last consist in this: that the dramatic works of the past need less and less be called upon for aid, and the achievements of the living forces of the present would make a reaching back to older things seem day by day less needful."

If this call for fresh labourers to be sent forth into the harvest is thoroughly characteristic of the creative artist who for years had been urging his "colleagues" to rouse themselves, equally characteristic of the author of *Art and Revolution* and *The Art-work of the Future* is the suggestion for a "gradual extinction of the player class as a caste dissevered from our civic life, and its replacement by an artistic fellowship in which the whole of citizen society, according to aptitude and bent, would more or less take part." In Zurich itself he already finds the scattered planks for such a platform, what with gymnastic drill, athletic contests, vocal unions, costumed processions, and so forth; whilst "in certain country districts youth and riper years alike engage already in performances of actual plays." Only guide these forces to one common goal: "In the more mature dramatic artists of this theatre will be found the natural teachers for developing those artistic faculties which needs must bud in our young people from the very liking woken in them by the sights and sounds of the stage"; and thus, "perchance, the Theatre at last would constitute the highest social rallying-point of a public art-intercourse from which all taint of Industry had been completely wiped away." We almost seem to have recovered that submerged essay on *Das Künstlerthum der Zukunft*, for our author proceeds: "In wider and yet wider circles, and finally by the State itself, there would be found an ever greater inducement to employ this institution for the artistic training of youth. In course of time there would develop an ever larger number of native talents in a position to fill eventual gaps in the personnel of the theatre, without thereby abandoning their civic calling, or entering a separate player-class; till at last, as the institute continued flourishing, the whole effective company would consist of nothing but the flower of a native burgher-artisthood."

Finally, we have a sign that the social "revolutionary" is mellowing down; a sign confirmed by the fact of his occasional association with the Conservative organ, the *Eidgenössische Zeitung*, and with no other Zurich newspaper. Anticipating the surprise of those who know his "views upon the relation of our modern Civilisation to genuine Art, expressed elsewhere," Wagner adds: "I nevertheless have held it necessary to unearth every possibility of a nobler prospering of public art in present circumstances, because in truth a large field still lies open within them

and a field by no means measured out as yet. . . . But the artistic object meant by me is only to be compassed by the force of a common Will; to have roused that Will in a handful of men of willing hearts and thinking heads, may for the present be my sole success. . . . A favourable issue to their zeal would certainly be no small warrant for a happy future, and a Future quite in the sense of those who address their civic energies to a reasonable preservation and advancement of the Existing."

In the letter in which Wagner announces this unique production to his literary satellite, he says: "I cannot count upon immediate success—but, under circumstances, on a gradual. All the courage I now can acquire, rests on the hope of practical realisations."* He has done with abstract *theory* for some years to come; in the social line there seems but little hope; yet his artistic foundations have been well and truly laid, and it is for others, equally with himself, to build upon them if they will. But Zurich was as little disposed as before, to relax its purse-strings to insure a theatre. "The assents I received," he tells us in 1872, "were not of an encouraging nature. They mostly came from persons who believed they saw in my proposal a decent pretext for extending their hobby of so-called private theatricals to a full public appearance in actual Comedy. More intelligent friends found it simply inconceivable, how anything at all to be tolerated could be done for the theatre with townsmen speaking such an ugly dialect. That there would be any dearth of poets, however, nobody feared; for everyone thought himself competent to write a good play" (*P.* V. 177).

On his 38th birthday (May 22, 1851) Wagner accents the earnestness of his advice by applying it to Weimar and his friend there: "Write an opera for Weimar—I implore you; write it expressly for the means you have at hand, means to be ennobled and enlarged by your work itself." In the meantime Liszt himself has given him occasion to expand the notion of an "original theatre" beyond the narrow bounds of Zurich. April 18 we find our author telling Liszt: "I wanted to write you also about your Goethe-Stiftung, but must defer it to an hour of greater leisure, to take proper stock of your magnificent idea." We have already

* In Chapter V we shall see that this brochure forms a well-defined link in the chain of ideas that led to the conception of a Dramatic Festival for performance of the *Ring des Nibelungen*.

heard of a meeting of Goethians at Weimar, held at the time of the *Lohengrin* production. To follow this up, Liszt had published a monograph entitled "De la fondation-Goethe à Weymar."* The scheme Liszt submits, is that of an annual competition, alternately in poetry, painting, sculpture and music; a committee of experts, drawn from every German state, is to judge the works and award a prize with fitting ceremony; the name of the artist "crowned" is to be proclaimed in the newspapers, and his work to be exhibited, performed, or printed and circulated by the Stiftung itself, as the case may be. Such are the main outlines of Carol.-Liszt's too composite proposal, and we can scarcely wonder that it was never realised—more especially when we read these words addressed by Liszt to his collaboratrix: "If nothing comes of our idea at Weimar, so much the better. On the one hand, people here are obstinate enough to spoil the best of plans; on the other—you will save 5000 thlr for a Catholic church. What a disappointment for that pagan Goethe!" (Apr. 15, '51).—By May the 8th Wagner has had time to digest not only Liszt's, but also several other suggestions; among them one by a certain Herr Schöll in the *Deutsches Museum*, who would go a step farther than Carolyszt, and claim the proposed foundation almost exclusively for plastic artists! He accordingly writes Liszt a letter now figuring in his *Gesammelte Schriften* under the title "Ueber die Goethe-Stiftung."†

This letter, or rather this miniature essay, is important for more reasons than one. On its very first page, after a few obligatory compliments, Wagner blurts out the exact, but disconcerting prophecy: "I may tell you candidly, I entirely disbelieve in the coming about of a '*Goethestiftung*,' at least in its ever coming about in your sense. You desire a union, where the most absolute disunion is conditioned by the nature of things. Our *Art* being completely splintered into separate *arts*, each of

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* Like the majority of Liszt's literary efforts, this monograph was indited in collaboration with Princess Carolyne Wittgenstein, to whom he writes Feb. 16, '51: "Brockhaus m'a envoyé ce matin quelques exemplaires de la *Fondation-Goethe*. Je vous envoie un, comme exemplaire *d'auteur*." That accounts for much.

† See *Prose Works* III. The letter, with a few modifications necessary to annul its private character, was first published in the *Neue Zeitschrift* of March 5, 1852.

these demands supremacy for itself alone, and each several art will make out a title to the greatest need of help." And the sort of union? Under the familiar title of "Art-union" we know it only too well. "Members for this union will be found in largest numbers, and with openest purses, if on every Goethe anniversary one holds an art-lottery—as somebody will be sure to propose in the end." Seriously, however, we have to remember that "this institution happens to be proposed, not in honour of Dürer or Thorwaldsen, but of *Goethe*," who himself was "unable to realise his highest aim" for want of a proper organ. "We see this poet's creative impulse urging him at every epoch toward its fullest consummation in actual Drama; we see him giving his whole heart to the endless attempt to win that realising organ from and in the existing Theatre; we see him turn away at last despairing from that torture." Wherefore the Poet may well "implore that before all else he be provided with the artistic organ for that realisement, in a *Theatre* answering to the nature of his higher aim; since it is impossible for the poet to provide *himself* with a theatre in the same easy fashion as the plastic artist obtains his technical materials." To the providing himself with a theatre, in the most literal sense, we know it had eventually to come in Wagner's case; what, then, was amiss with the contemporary stage?

"The artistic media at our theatres are trained for nothing but to distract boredom or recreate the weary man of business," and the poet with higher aspirations consequently finds himself thrown back on pen and paper, or printer's ink. "But what would the painter or sculptor say, if we told him to content himself with pencil and paper, and forgo all colour and brush, all stone and chisel? He would reply that we thereby robbed him of all possibility of realising his artistic idea, and bound him down to merely hinting it.—We then might make rejoinder: Very well, you shall be allowed the tools of industry, just as you refer the poet to our industrial theatres. Adapt your aim to the means and end of the painter of shop-signs or the hewer of gravestones, and you'll have precisely the same sort of task before you as you allot to the poet when you direct him to our stage." Painter and sculptor resent the insult. Then "content yourselves with merely sketching out your thought, like us; sell your sketch to the art-dealer, and you'll have the advantage of seeing it circulated

in thousands of cheap lithographs or engravings. Mind you, this is what the poet of our day has to be satisfied with; you surely can't ask more than he, under the patronage of a *Goethestiftung* too!" There is no getting away from such an argument, even if you choose to call it special pleading.

But the declared object of this *Goethestiftung* is the furtherance of Art. So be it. "A merely material assistance to the artist in disposing of his handiwork, and even the adjudgment of a prize, can never have the ideal effect of *furthering* Art. . . . He who does not feel within himself a force compelling him to art-creation, and is first to be spurred to production through the chance of pecuniary reward or honourable mention, will never give birth to a genuine artwork. Something else must be offered the artist, however, if he is to win the courage, nay, the ability, for creating: and that is *the possibility of bringing the product of his thought to a show in correspondence with his aim, so that his intention may be truly understood, i.e. be felt.*" Goethe himself, "vanquished by the impossibility of grappling with the Theatre in *his* sense, withdrew from it altogether. Naturally, this failure of courage on the part of a Goethe passed down to his poetic heirs; and their enforced abandonment of the Theatre has been the very reason of their losing more and more the true creative faculty even in poetic Literature." So the stage has been left to "the exploitation of our modern industrial playwrights." It is of the German stage in the middle of the nineteenth century, that Wagner is speaking, and the portrait he paints of it is as black as can be: "With our Theatre, in the hopeless depravity into which it has fallen since Goethe's fruitless endeavours to raise it, the nobler spirit of our poetry can have nothing to do, without sullying itself: here it meets an evil system which it cannot approach without disfiguring itself past recognition. Any new and individual departure, such as the Goethestiftung would have to further or incite in general, the poet cannot even dream of striking through the medium of our Theatre; where it would only be misunderstood." And so we come to a mighty expansion of the idea underlying *A Theatre at Zurich*, to the first definite herald of 'Bayreuth':—the foremost duty of a *Goethe*-institution should be, "to found *a Theatre that shall serve as fitting organ for realising in Dramatic Art-work the most distinctive thoughts of the German Spirit.*"

Only when such a Theatre were founded—and by "Theatre" our author signifies the whole art of dramatic representation—would it be time to challenge the plastic artists to compete for a *Goethe* prize. Perchance it might then occur to them "likewise to weld their *segments* of art into a whole. And for that whole they would have to let the *architect* lay down the law, from whose uniting tutelage they now with so much idle pride continue to withdraw." Thus this little work, which had begun with a prophecy of disappointment, concludes with a harbinger of hope. For the same great architect whom Wagner manifestly had in mind when writing the above—Gottfried Semper, whose eulogy he had penned but a few weeks since—was eventually to design for Ludwig of Bavaria that concrete Theatre of the Future which nothing but the jealousy of disunited artists prevented from adorning Munich years ago with all its original majesty, and the mere carcase whereof has proved at Bayreuth the magic of an all-embracing mind.

But Wagner dares not look so far ahead, as yet. "Let us draw a smaller circle for the present, and keep a definite end in view," he apostrophises colleague Liszt: "You have your Weimar theatre, and for that you need no Goethe-unions. If they want to help you, let them set to work at home, and follow your example there. But you may rest entirely content with Weimar for the present; and should the Goethe Committee leave you in the lurch, why! let them go. Let them found a Goethe-lottery; but you, meanwhile lay you a *veritable Goethe-foundation*, and call it what you will!"

The pliancy of Liszt's character comes out in nothing more strikingly than in his reception of this unexpected douche. The hose has been brought to play on his (and Carolyne's) best set-piece, yet he not only begs Wagner to allow his *Goethestiftung* letter to be published,* but humbly asks him to draw up a list of works most suitable for raising the status of the Weimar theatre (May 17, 51). Wagner replies with another long letter (May 22), which might well have been united with the "*Goethestiftung*" and the "*Theatre at Zurich*" to form a perfect triptych. Here

* Princess Wittgenstein, it should be observed, was still away from Weimar; so that Liszt had not yet had the benefit of that lady's opinion on a criticism inherently destructive of their somewhat banal scheme. Adolf Stahr, on the other hand, had read and discussed Wagner's letter with Liszt.

again, while the ampler plan is never lost sight of, small beginnings are advocated. "If something is to be undertaken counter to prevalent views of art, to prove those views injurious, it naturally can only be done by individuals. Our very first business, therefore, is to prepare *ourselves* for action, and to associate with none but our nearest affinities. In this light do I approach the Theatre. If we want to bring the Theatre, of all Germany for instance, into a reasonable condition, we ourselves shall not attain the smallest rational result if we don't begin at some fixed point—be it even an infinitesimal." For Liszt, of course, that point is Weimar: "Pursue the path of *originality* in your productions with more and more determination; give conscious voice to that determination; win yourselves more and more upholders of it—and you will very soon find the means of gradually realising what you want. The news of Raff's opera has pleased me uncommonly. That's right; but now farther—*you yourself must strike out.* Write an opera for Weimar, I beseech you, expressly for the means you have at hand. . . . Don't bother your head at present about the other German theatres and their conditions; you don't need them, to turn out something beautiful at once and useful. . . . You yourself must find out what you have to do." The same with the executant side: "Do something thorough for a proper training of your company. From nowhere will you get your artists, if you don't produce them for yourselves. Look to it, that your singers be good actors *in the first place:* who cannot speak well, how should he ever sing? . . . To be frank: you need a capable stage-manager, not a man grown grey in routine. . . . Further! You must have a really good singing-master." The last two requirements are tolerably obvious, yet who can say that even now they are fulfilled in Germany? "I am perfectly aware that a man cannot become an artist merely through *training;* but an artist he can never become if his organic faculties are not developed soundly: and in that respect we go lacking almost everywhere." Here were practical suggestions worth all the prizes to be offered by that chameleon Fondation-Goethe, if Liszt had only taken them more seriously to heart, i.e. if Carolyne had not been always dragging him away from Theatre to Church.

Anticipating a question that may occur to his friend after reading *A Theatre at Zurich* (just sent to him), namely, whether

he would absolutely exclude all *foreign* works, Wagner answers it with: "Certainly at first, and until attainment of our main object, but not for all the future. That main object consists in this, that the theatre I have in mind should educate itself to perfect independence through the originality of its doings, should become a conscious individual. Only then should it exchange its products with those of other, of equally independent theatric entities, and thereby fertilise itself to ever greater capability and variety, and thus pass on to ever broader, to universal-human circles. The fruitfulness of such exchange, however, is only to be hoped for when in the act of reception it at the same time gives; only when it is in a position to *give*, can it *receive* with any benefit. At present our theatres are so entirely un-selfreliant, so completely lack all individuality, that they can *only* receive, without real power to assimilate the thing received: they are undeveloped creatures, pappy, spongy molluscs, from whom a *man* can never, never come." And the olla podrida of pieces they present: "The wild conglomeration of all genres and styles is the awful thing that stops our performers from arriving at any inkling of an artistic notion. Gluck to-day, to-morrow Donizetti—to-day Weber, to-morrow Rossini or Auber; to-day a serious piece, to-morrow a frivolous: with what result? That they can give *neither* Gluck *nor* Donizetti, neither seriousness nor frivolity." Liszt having asked for an immediate programme for his theatre, Wagner's practical advice is as follows:—"Above all, habituate your singers to thinking first of a *dramatic* task. The most appropriate, therefore, are works of the older French school, since in them a natural dramatic aim is most discernible. A company that cannot make me a good effect with Cherubini's *Water-carrier* or Méhul's *Joseph*, and so on, how shall it be in the position to master the (in *that* case) enormous difficulties of one of my operas, for instance?—But the main point remains: New works, and works adapted to one's own stage-company and framed expressly for one's theatre."

Perhaps the above will correct the view of those who look on Richard Wagner as caring for nothing but the future of his own creations, as nursing little Weimar merely as "a hotbed for his fame." Just as with *A Theatre at Zurich*, his adjuration is "new works," new works by *others*, and new in every sense. The printing of his *Opera and Drama* is scarcely begun, yet he has no

idea of forcing its constructive system down his comrades' throats: Pursue your own methods, he tells them, provided only you abide by the fundamental axiom that the Musical Drama *must* be dramatic. The more various the application of that principle, the better will it be for all concerned; but the main thing is *novelty* of plan, to chase away the sloth of old routine. And these "new works" will also spur on the performers to new versatility, equipping them for the very highest tasks in Drama, and raising the Theatre to a dignity and efficacity such as few save a Goethe had dreamt of.—The theme, apparently, is inexhaustible; for it is but three months since the manuscript of *Opera and Drama* was completed, and already the author of that work has to pull himself up "lest I should be tempted to another book of 400 pages. For there would be *very much* to be said upon an 'Original Theatre,' to make my idea entirely intelligible to the larger public; and on the other hand I want to cry a halt to book-writing, to set about an artwork myself."

Book-writing was not quite done with yet, for the "Preface to Three Opera-poems" (*Communication*) has still to round off the phase. The new "artwork," *Der junge Siegfried*, is meantime taken in hand; but we may reserve all discussion of that for the present. The completion of its poem is directly followed by a visit from its author's chief literary confidant, as yet wellnigh the only public champion of his artistic theories.

We have lately had frequent occasion to quote from letters of Wagner's to a member of the Dresden orchestra, of whom we caught but a fugitive glimpse in our volume ii. As we are now about to accompany him on an intimate visit, the time has arrived for a formal introduction:—

Theodor Uhlig, son of a humble regimental bandsman, was born at Wurzen, near Leipzig, the 15th of February 1822. At the age of five he shewed such uncommon interest in music, that his father at once commenced his personal instruction in that art. Left an orphan at 11, together with his sister he was admitted into the Military Orphanage near Pirna. Here the boy's intelligence and industry soon made him a favourite with his teachers, and shortly after his arrival a composition of his was performed before King Anton, on a visit of that sovereign's to the institute. Two years later he played a violin solo before

the same King of Saxony, who died soon after Uhlig's confirmation, too early to fulfil his promise of support. King Friedrich August II., however, had him placed in 1837 at the Music-school in Dessau, then presided over by our old friend Friedrich Schneider (see vols. i and ii). Here Theodor remained till 1840, receiving lessons in composition from F. Schneider himself. His education completed, he was compelled to earn his living by the ill-paid work of an "aspirant," or "accessist," to the Dresden Royal Kapelle, the salary amounting to the noble sum of £23 a year. By March 1841 he was lucky enough to succeed to a vacancy in the full membership, with a consequent doubling of his pittance. That was only three or four months before the acceptance of *Rienzi;* nevertheless Uhlig was by no means one of the earliest Wagnerians: owing perhaps to his studies under such a representative of the rigorously fugal school as Schneider, he remained in fact an opponent for the first few years. His conversion is generally attributed to the Palm Sunday performances of the Ninth Symphony. Whatever the cause, from about 1847 Theodor Uhlig, then five-and-twenty, became a thick-and-thin admirer of our hero's; not until Wagner's sixth letter in exile (Jan. 1850), however, does he elevate his correspondent to the rank of "Du." Wagner's own account of the beginning of this friendship is contained in a letter to Liszt of July 11, 1851, written during Uhlig's stay at Zurich: "As a mere novice he surprised me in the Dresden Kapelle by his uncommon musical accuracy and intelligence. Tokens of unusual strength of character and manly steadfastness drew my attention more closely to him; I admitted him to my society, found that he had developed himself entirely by his own perseverance under the most straitened of circumstances, and won in him a friend who, since we were parted, has made it the task of his life to serve me, so far as his powers extend, in a way surpassed by nothing but your dazzling genius—the heart-affection being equal."

From his own writings it is difficult to conjure up an image of this faithful soul; nor can his musical compositions—overtures, quartets, songs &c.—be called to our assistance, as, even if printed, they are not now accessible. His own letters to Wagner have not been published; so that our only graphic record of his personality is a most excellent photogravure in Mr H. S. Chamberlain's

Richard Wagner, taken from a plaster medallion by Gustav Kietz (belonging to the late Alexander Ritter). The portrait is of two-fold interest to us, since we met young Kietz so often with the master in his Dresden years, and it certainly exhibits far more talent than the pastel of Wagner drawn by Gustav's elder brother Ernst (p. 35 *antea*). Judging by this medallion, which appears to be a speaking likeness, Uhlig's features were of that delicate attenuated type we find so often in religious paintings by the old Italian masters; set on a slender stalk of a neck, the face is most graceful of profile—so much so, that by concealing the eye with the point of your finger, you might take it for that of a woman; restore the eye, and you discover calm tenacity, but no real force or fire. The forehead is too narrow for original thought, and the whole physiognomy that of a disciple who would willingly go to the stake in the cause of a master once recognised, but possessing little initiative of his own. A beautiful moral character, almost saint-like, one might say; peaceful, recipient as the meadow to the rain, and soothing by the very meekness of its receptivity. This gentle receptivity was manifestly Uhlig's charm, fidelity to the charge received his virtue; but colourless he remains to us who never knew him, colourless as the plaster of that pensive cast. Could we have seen him in his intercourse with Wagner, that colourlessness, no doubt, would have departed; each hue rayed on him by the stronger mind we may imagine him then reflecting.

His literary activity Uhlig commenced in June 1849, i.e. the month after Wagner left Dresden. Hitherto he had been nothing but an "absolute musician" (as Wagner calls him in Letter 14), but recent events had evidently worked in him as a new leaven, and he soon comes forward as an open advocate of Wagner's maxim, "Art, not art-varieties." In an obituary notice (*Neue Zeitschrift*, Jan. 21, 1853) Franz Brendel claims the credit of having been the first to move Uhlig to "represent the Wagnerian tendency" in his journal,—after he himself had had the scales removed from his eyes by Wagner's *Art and Revolution* and its successor,—thereby implying that Uhlig's first contributions were more hesitant in tone. It surely needed no incentive beyond the stimulating letters his greater friend began to send him almost as soon as they were separated; nevertheless, a hint from the editor might well embolden the contributor to make a more explicit stand. However that may be, if it stood in the way of his

developing much originality of treatment, Uhlig's natural receptivity made him a more faithful exponent of Wagner's artistic views than the said editor himself. Down to his premature decease, he was henceforth a regular collaborator in the *Neue Zeitschrift*, with occasional articles furnished also to the *Deutsche Monatsschrift* (while the latter journal existed); his subjects being Instrumental Music, Beethoven's Symphonies, Wagner's Operas and Art-writings, besides a number of general musical criticisms and polemical sallies—in which, alas! the wit is none too Attic. Had he lived longer, this Wagnerian lieutenant might have left us some essays worth preserving; his ingrained diligence would certainly have prompted him to unremitting efforts to improve and clarify his style, sorting out his verbs, for instance, instead of handing them to us in a whole packet at the end of a sentence; but, as things stand, his articles have little more than an historic interest—they laid the first foundations for a more widespread acquaintance with his leader's theories.

To Wagner himself it was of vital importance that his theories should be spread in regions none too fond of book-reading, and Uhlig at least did not distort them; so the master continually heaps his pupil with sincerest thanks, once going the length of modestly telling him that he himself has "learnt much" from these articles—though that was at an early stage, and referred to an appreciation of Beethoven's symphonies. But even the "humour" he at first had counselled, then applauded, he soon discovers to be forced and tedious; whereas the young man's constant repetition of his senior's phrases elicits in March of this 1851 the mild expostulation: "You let your own light shine too little; my writings have somewhat estranged you from your own peculiar self." Wagner would rather have him apply his special faculties to detailed illustration, than perpetually reiterate the broader formulæ themselves: "You have already done that very well, and surely can do it still better now. Only, guard yourself from appearing to your adversary in the light of a dependent, through the outer garment with which you now too often clothe yourself for love of me." That Uhlig could have safely cut the leading-strings, and picked his own way through the maze of problems confronting the inquirer into either *dramatic* art or sociology, is open to more than doubt. In the province of *musical*

analysis, on the other hand, he is in his element, and the expostulation of March is followed in May by a warm encomium on his review of the *Tannhäuser* overture.

At present Uhlig is busy completing a pianoforte edition of *Lohengrin*, and much correspondence on that subject has passed between him and the composer. The original score, a treasure reluctantly exposed to all the perils of the post for the purpose of arrangement, is now to accompany the young man on a long-promised visit, to which Wagner looks forward with almost a schoolboy's glee. "Be sure you come," are the last words of a letter dated June 24, carefully mapping out a brief itinerary: Uhlig is to take the rail to Lindau, then follow the same route by which the exile originally sought sanctuary in Zurich; at Rorschach his host will meet him. "*Uhlig* is here," Liszt is told on the 11th of July; "With the greatest self-sacrifice he has saved enough to enable him to visit me in Switzerland. Considering the placid coolness of his passionless nature, the faithful attachment and friendship of this young man are of great value to me." Something like a month is spent in intimate communion, enlivened by long walks and climbs, excursions to Brunnen, to the Uri-Rothstock, and so forth; though poor Uhlig already is getting so thin that Minna sends a message after his departure, hoping he "will come next year with plumper cheeks."

The new-fledged "comic opera-text" (Young Siegfried) is discussed, of course; but scarcely to much profit, for Uhlig cannot for the life of him understand how such a poem will work out in music. On the other hand, these weeks of converse with so diligent a student of his theoretic writings must have been of some service in clearing Wagner's survey of his earlier operas, the principal subject of his forthcoming *Communication;* in fact we may take it that a considerable portion of this book was written while Uhlig was still in the house. Then there were all the old Dresden friends to get news of, Tichatschek, young Kietz, F. Heine and old Fischer—a letter from whom Uhlig brings in his pocket; the changes at the theatre, too, and the present reactionary aspect of the Saxon capital. A couple of months ago Wagner had inquired about the possibility of conveying a word of comfort to poor captive Roeckel; the mode of operation was evidently now discussed, for the first of

Wagner's letters to his whilom deputy is dated August 24 of this year.*

So flew the happy hours away; and when the parting came, it left in Wagner's heart a void which Liszt alone could have filled—Liszt whose promise of a visit had been cancelled by the whims of his princess. "Every spark of joy I have to strike for myself from a heap of roadside pebbles," says the answer to Uhlig's first brief greeting after resumption of his Dresden duties; "I'm too terribly starved by my surroundings. As for the men, there's as good as nothing to be done with them. So I've a positive passion for obtaining something from outside:—from earliest morn my only hope of distraction is to get a letter—a token of love: midday comes—brings nothing—the day dies out in hunger unappeased, and I gnaw my entrails once again."

It is this craving for "a token of love," a sign of sympathy, that prompted the *Communication to my Friends*, the last long literary work of the Zurich period. On the same day as the lines above, we have the following to Roeckel, "It is highly comic, to hear from many people that they think of 'reconcilement' between myself and my former situation: so little is one understood, when one has the artist's qualities." It was part and parcel of the whole contemporary misconception of Wagner's aims, this imagining that all he was concerned for were the loaves and fishes of his art, no matter how procured. His *Opera and Drama* has just laid down his views upon the subject of that art in general; the particular "position of his individuality towards that subject" he demonstrates, from every point of view, in the *Communication*, thus completing the volute begun two years ago apparently so far away.

To work had he set with redoubled vigour as soon as Uhlig left him, and the manuscript is despatched to Breitkopf and Härtel on August 16, after a little over a week spent in fair-copying: "It has fatigued me much; yet if I want relaxation, I really don't know how to come by it. My most terrible times

* A letter full of the tenderest solicitude, though Wagner writes it in the cramping consciousness that it will be examined by the Governor of the prison. For example, it would be difficult to match the delicacy of feeling that dictated the following: "This beautiful land of alps refreshed me much at first; I hope you are strong enough, in your captivity, to hear of it without too poignant melancholy."

are those when I am compelled to recreate, distract myself: then first do I grow aware how things stand with me" (to Uhlig, Aug. 24). His work had so engrossed him, that not until the manuscript was off his hands did he begin to grow impatient for a letter from his recent guest; only during "the last eight days," has he "sworn" at Uhlig for his silence: from the moment he has finished his message to others, his solitude becomes unbearable. Even this *Communication*, "the weightiest thing I had to say, since it was absolutely necessary in completion of 'Opera and Drama'"—as he observes after re-perusing it, in print—will it clear the vision of his friends? "With open eyes I have to yield myself to illusions, to justify activity of any kind" (to Roeckel, Aug. 24).

So freely has *A Communication to my Friends* been drawn upon for our previous volumes, especially in connection with the author's operas, that I may here confine myself to its introductory section.

In the first place, it has to be remembered that this lengthy self-examination originally appeared as an actual Preface to the poems of *Der fliegende Holländer*, *Tannhäuser*, and *Lohengrin*, the author then declaring in its opening sentence that his reason for the special issue of those three opera-poems themselves—a quite unprecedented step—was "to explain the real or apparent contradiction they, and the musical compositions sprung from them, present to the views and principles set forth in *Opera and Drama*," then on the eve of publication. The main bulk of the *Communication*, therefore, is to be regarded as an object-lesson in the principles of the larger treatise; abstract theories are here replaced by concrete illustration; the author's extant operas are tried, and in many a respect found wanting, by the standard they themselves have led him to. It was a necessity, to cut the ground from under the feet of those who "leave the evolutionary factor entirely out of count" and seek to crush alike his operas and his present comprehensive theories by convicting the one out of the mouth of the other;* whereas it actually had taken him years of

* Obviously referring to a recent article in the Leipzig *Grenzboten;* an article which led to young Bülow's début in the *Neue Zeitschrift* with so slashing an attack on the whole "Leipzig clique," that Brendel had to suppress the first half of it. See H. v. Bülow's *Ausgewählte Schriften.*

"gradual evolution, step by step to reach his present standpoint." The best reply would of course have been a 'Wagner week' at the theatre, with the three operas performed *correctly* and in chronologic order. That being out of the question, and many of his "friends" knowing only one out of the three—or perhaps but their herald, *Rienzi*—the simplest mode of vindication was to print their libretti as an independent literary cycle, accompanied by an autobiographic commentary. Liszt himself had lately asked for biographic details; * in reply Wagner had told him, on his last birthday, "I am none of those elect (like Mendelssohn) into whose mouths the 'solid' manna fell straight from heaven, and who therefore can say 'I have never erred'; whereas poor earth-worms like ourselves must struggle through error to knowledge of a truth."

But why so emphatically "to my friends"? The whole history of the Wagnerian movement is summed in those three words. Almost the first lines of this introduction lay it down as an axiom, that "never was an artist loved, his art in a position to be comprehended, unless he was also loved as man—at least unconsciously—and with his art his life, as well, was understood." The assertion has often been demurred to, by those who lack the organ for that almost indefinable sense of personal character conveyed by an artist's or an author's works; but in Richard Wagner's case it seems to be of the very essence of the contract. Never was an artist so hated and so loved as man, and that in direct ratio to the dislike or liking aroused by his artworks.

To his *friends*, then, will he address this *Communication*. But he must first define them. They certainly are *not* the men who "read their own uncertainty and puzzledom into the artistic object, the so-called Impartial Critics, who devote their utmost cunning to proving their censorious selves the only 'true friends' of the artist—whose actual foes would therefore be those who take their stand beside him in full sympathy." That Impartial Critic is with us to this day, still posing as the only true friend of the man and artist whose every act he labours to distort. "For

* More particularly for a copy of the earlier Autobiographic Sketch (in Laube's *Elegante* 1843). Wagner's answer is itself a contribution to his own psychology: "I can't be accused of vanity this time, the vanity of carrying my biography about with me. I don't possess a copy, neither can I obtain one here."

my own part," says Wagner in this introduction, "I have lost the faculty of figuring a friendship without love; still harder should I find it, to conceive how modern criticism and friendship for the artist criticised could possibly be convertible terms." For years the representatives of "modern criticism" had been heaping him with the most scandalous abuse and misrepresentation; for a quarter of an hour they are at his mercy, and a bad quarter of an hour they will find it. "When the absolute Critic looks out from his peephole on the Artist, he sees as good as *nothing*—namely, his own likeness on the mirror of his vanity. . . . I do not address myself to these gentry, so proud of their paper life: I decline to accept a single token of their Critical friendship. What I might have to tell them, even *about* myself and my artistic doings, they would not permit themselves to understand, were it only since they consider it their business to know everything in the world already." As for the scum who all along had befouled his personal acts and motives, they are left on one side in disdain: "They have descended to the lowest journalistic blackguardism," he remarks to Uhlig;* "Were I to take any notice of them, I should equally have to take notice of Schladebach and Co." To *that* kind of reptile Wagner never stooped to reply.

So far, we have only received a negative answer to our question, Who are the "friends"? The positive we have to piece together, for ourselves, from several different paragraphs in this introductory section. Its upshot is, that these "friends," whether personally known to the author or not, are all who combine enough artistic culture with lack of prejudice, to be able to divine what an artist is aiming at, even through the medium of imperfect representations; all who have sufficient sympathy with the peculiar difficulties of his situation, to be glad to hear an authentic account of his inner and outer evolution; and finally, who will read his explanations with the object of making sense, not nonsense, of them. That, expressed in slightly different language, is the gist of this exordium.

Unfortunately, this preface to a preface was not to be so simply left to its appeal. "Uhlig is here," and Uhlig manifestly intervened with a suggestion that certain unused sketches in Wagner's literary portfolio—for articles on "the Monumental," "Genius,"

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* Letter 56, apropos of a later and more violent effort of the *Grenzboten*.

and so on—should be saved from oblivion by incorporation with what he then intended to be his *last* word in prose. It is the only way to account for the patchwork to which these first two-dozen pages, i.e. over a sixth of the whole *Communication*, have been reduced, or rather, expanded;* and one feels inclined to "bother!" Uhlig for piling obstacles before the threshold of an otherwise most lucid and instructive tale.

The troubles of the *Communication*, alias "A Preface to three Opera-poems," by no means ended with the despatch of the completed manuscript to Messrs Breitkopf and Härtel (Aug. 16, '51), who were already engraving the pianoforte-score of *Lohengrin*. In case of acceptance, the proofs were to be sent direct to Uhlig for correction, as we learn from Wagner's letter of September 8; "Don't be cross with me for thus disposing of your leisure." For a full month the Härtels gave no answer; obviously, the work was waiting its turn to be read. Toward the latter end of September approval came, as may be unriddled from a more than telegraphically laconic epistle to Uhlig (No. 33, undated, but self-dating as about Sept. 25): "Härtels respectable, having sent 10 louis d'or"—which would be proportionately a shade handsomer than the honorarium J. J. Weber paid for *Opera and Drama*. At anyrate Uhlig is receiving proofs before the middle of October, for Wagner writes him in Letter 35 (again undated): "Another request as regards the 'Preface.' As soon as you send its last sheets back to Härtels, beg them in my name to send Liszt at once a corrected proof of the whole Preface." A reference in the next letter to Uhlig—likewise undated, but demonstrably of the 18th or 19th October—places it beyond doubt that the setting-up had made considerable headway; Wagner wishes a slight change made in the text at the end of *Tannhäuser*, one of the "three opera-poems" in question, and instructs his deputy, "In case Härtels have not got so far as that in type, you might send them this insertion in advance; otherwise you could attend to it when correcting."—Uhlig must indeed have had his hands full; for he was keeping an eye on the second edition of the *Tannhäuser* pfte-score (pub. Meser), and had only just finished correcting the proofs both of *Opera and Drama* and of his piano-

* For details, see Appendix.

forte score of *Lohengrin*.* Wagner himself had been obliged to take a complete rest from all mental exertion for the present; hence the "heavy burden" laid upon his friend, for which he apologises on October 28, and again on the 30th: "I am more than grieved at having slung so much work round your neck. I fear I shall knock you up. Reassure me on that point, if you honestly can." By now the whole set of proofs for the *Communication* itself had certainly come in, and been passed for press by Uhlig, since Wagner expresses his surprise that "Liszt has had nothing from Härtels as yet: they must have a deal of cotton-wool in their ears!" †

Sooth to say, there was more than "cotton-wool in the ears" of the worthy Härtels. Evidently they had accepted the manuscript on its general merits and the report of a manager, especially as they were publishing the pianoforte score of one of the texts it comprised; not until the work was readably set up in type, would it come up for final judgment by the heads of the firm. Then falls a bolt from the blue. Nov. 1, Wagner to Uhlig: "My!—Härtels have only just read the Preface, and are afraid to publish it. I've written to Avenarius, that he or someone else must take it over." So things drag on for the best part of three weeks, in a doubly vexing manner. Nov. 11 we have a letter to Uhlig,‡ beginning: "I have been a long time again without news. Five days have I been expecting an answer from Avenarius about the publication of the 'three opera-poems,' and can hardly contain myself for impatience that just this Preface—the close of which, as regards Weimar, has already been nullified by my latest decision—should come out much too late. I shall almost be compelled to give Liszt notice of the lapse of our opera-contract

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* For the latter alone did he receive pecuniary recompense, namely from Härtels. As between Wagner and himself, it was a labour of love.

† His informant was apparently young Bülow, in frequent correspondence with him, as Liszt himself does not write till December 1: "Härtels had promised me your Preface; but I have received nothing as yet. Perhaps you have got another publisher? Let me know about it through Bülow, who is also writing you."

‡ Wrongly numbered "44" in the printed collection, where it and "43" should change places. The only date it bears is "Tuesday morning," but internal evidence conclusively proves that it was written the day *before* Letter "43," which is dated "Albisbrunn, 12 November 51," i.e. a Wednesday.

before that Communication proves to him that it had really been my honourable intent to work for Weimar." Next day he can bear the uncertainty no longer: "Still no answer from Avenarius. Would you be so good as to write to him and also to Härtels, that they really ought to let me know how matters stand. I almost fear my letters do not reach them." It was a particularly awkward fix; for there was news of great moment to be broken to Liszt, between whom and Wagner there had been no correspondence—save for half a dozen lines in August—since the middle of July.

By November 20 the clouds are clearing: "Avenarius writes me at last, the Härtels will be glad to keep my book; only, I must alter it a little. Why don't the idiots send me what I've got to alter?" This to Uhlig. The same day Wagner writes Liszt his ever-memorable letter announcing the full new project of the *Ring des Nibelungen*,* with its death-blow to all hopes of a Weimar *Siegfried*. Now that it was certain the proofs of the *Communication* could not possibly reach Liszt's hands for another fortnight at least, the plunge must be made at once, without the chill being softened by a printed eulogy. "What you, but *you alone*, have done for me at Weimar, is marvellous. Still more than that: without you, I should have been clean forgotten by now. Instead, you have drawn to me the public attention of friends of art by all manner of means, exclusively at your disposal; and with such energy and success that these efforts of yours for me, and for recognition of me, alone have placed me in the position even to think of executing such a plan as that with which I have just acquainted you. This I see perfectly clearly, and unreservedly I declare you the creator of my present position, perhaps not barren of a future." It was this that formed the closing theme of the *Communication*, the sincerest and most eloquent acknowledgment of Liszt's magnanimity. "What you have thus become to me, I have lately tried to make publicly known, putting it as soberly as possible—just because it was intended for publicity—and confining myself to sheer matters of fact. Obedient to an irresistible impulse of my heart, I have done this in a 'Communication to my Friends,' as preface to the publication of my 'three opera-poems.' In the same place I

* To be dealt with in Chapter V.

have frankly avowed that I had already despaired of ever undertaking an artistic work again, and that it was to be attributed to *you* alone and your resultful intervention, if I had plucked up heart once more for an artistic enterprise, to be dedicated to *you* and those of my friends whom I connote under the name of 'Weimar.' Unfortunately, the timidity of good Messrs Härtel, my intended publishers, has taken umbrage at certain passages in that Preface, to which I attached no demonstrative intention, and which I might just as well have put another way; whereby the issue of the book has been delayed to an extent that much distresses me."

On the whole, that delay was providential. It would have proved embarrassing in the long run, if a coming production of the two *Siegfrieds* at Weimar had been proclaimed to the world; for it would have necessitated a prompt official disclaimer. Certainly it was better to amend the close of the *Communication* while there yet was time; and so its author convinced himself before the week was out. Nov. 28, apparently after altering the peccant sheets of proofs for Härtels, he writes Uhlig: "To these little people with their fear of the police, it is only accidentals, turns of speech and strong expressions, that give offence. You will receive the alterations for correction, and then will see that nothing but externals — or perhaps unneedfuls — have been dropped; even of those, too, very little. However, I have just asked Härtels to send me the last sheet of the Preface as well: since it has dawdled so long, the announcement of my newest works ought to be more in accord with my latest decisions."

There we have the history of all the changes in this ill-starred *Communication* other than those to be conjectured in its introduction. For the one part, the modification or omission of "strong expressions" and so on, demanded by the Messrs Härtel, our only clue is Wagner's own hint about "timidity and the police." Plainly, it was a question of either politics or religion; perhaps also of a few personal allusions, such as I have presupposed concerning Herr von Lüttichau (vol. ii. 286). A 'dash' here and there in the main body of the text may presumably be attributed to this process of bowdlerising; but the revision cannot have been very extensive, or the work's appearance would have been delayed much longer; the subject has completely passed from Wagner's mind by the time he writes again to Uhlig,

December 3. Messrs Härtels' blue-pencilled proofs would doubtless constitute an interesting document, from the point of view of "publisher's conscience," if they should ever come to light. We may now dismiss them, however, with a smile at the short-sightedness of those who complain that Wagner did not furnish a fuller statement of his implication in the Dresden insurrection: if he had, it would have been erased; if he did, it was.

So much for the compulsory alterations. There yet remains the final voluntary change, to bring the last sheet of proof into line with the rapid advance of the author's artistic plans between August and November 1851. Everything down to the remark about the "friends whom I have learnt to group under the local name of *Weimar*" (*P.* I. 389) could stand as it was; then Wagner runs his pen through the conclusion, and substitutes three pages that must have taken the poor critics' breath away—the revelation of his new gigantic scheme, ending with the proud manifesto: "In *this* undertaking I can have nothing to do with our Theatre of *to-day*. If my friends assure themselves of this, together we shall surely also find at last *the circumstances* under which such a plan may be carried out—and perhaps I thus may also gain its sole enabler, their assistance.—So then, I give you ample time to think it out:—for only *with my work* will you see me again!"

As the days draw in, and the long dark winter nights proclaim the close of 1851, the termination of a lengthy crisis in our hero's mental life, the seal is affixed alike to his "testament" and its codicil, with their definite publication. Between the 20th and 28th of November he receives at last from publisher Weber his printed *Opera and Drama*. Just five weeks later (Dec. 30?) he receives from Härtels the *Communication*, and remarks to Uhlig—to whom is due its "fabulous freedom from misprints"—"God knows what others may think of it; but this Preface has immensely interested *me*, and I'm not ashamed to say so." That in itself is a morsel of autobiography: it shews how 'objectively' the author looked not only on his art, but also on the record of his life. Nor is he the only one it interests. Liszt writes from Weimar early in the new year: "Probably I am the last to tell you how sincerely your splendid work has rejoiced and cheered us all. How can we thank you for it? How am *I*, in particular, to express my thanks?" Well might Wagner bid goodbye to three long years of

literary labour with the question to Uhlig, "What further can I say, if my friends do not see clearly now? I have omitted nothing to make myself intelligible. The rest is simply a matter for those who interest themselves in me."

Looking back to 1848, we find an almost exclusively meditative period beginning with a scheme for reorganisation of the existing Theatre: it ends with the announcement of a work that must create for itself a Theatre in every sense unlike the existing. The broadest generalisations on Art and Life followed in the immediate wake of the first idea of theatric reform; then came the deepest scrutiny of the principles of Drama, with the sure foundation for an artwork to embrace all other arts; and lastly a minute description of the artist's inner organism, with the self-told history of his mental conflicts and his personal aims. If here and there a point is laboured, a digression spun to too great length, we must bear in mind the vastness of the field for thought, the earnestness of the endeavour to make it arable. In the middle of last century, Society itself seemed once more hovering on the brink of that melting-pot into which it had been hurled at the end of the century before. The Dramatist, of all artists, would be the last to stay unmoved by the fortunes and the fate of Man; and though we may occasionally rebel against being suddenly led aside to reflect on "the relations of the Individual to the State" and so forth, not only are these disquisitions for the most part of serious moment, but the author could never have made his art-creations so grand a mirror of the world itself, so potent an appeal to our sympathies, had he not first taken up the world into his thought and searched its leading motives to the quick. To say nothing of the titanic proportions of the Nibelungen *poem*, may we not trace the overwhelming majesty of such a theme as the Walhall-motive—where Music seems to span a universe—to this boundless range of "private meditations" thought aloud?

IV.

FRANZ LISZT'S WEIMAR.

Liszt as "Kapellmeister in Extraordinary."—Princess Carolyne Sayn-Wittgenstein.—Bonds riven and riveted.—The princess settles down in Weimar.—Life at the Altenburg.—Literary collaboration.—Eilsen, near Bückeburg.—Carolyne versus "the institute."—urth and fifth performances of Lohengrin.—*Strange history of the* Lohengrin-*analysis.*—*"The tragedy of the Altenburg": Rome.*

> *Il est dans l'art contemporain un nom déja glorieux et qui le sera de plus en plus—Richard Wagner. Son génie m'a été un flambeau; je l'ai suivi—et mon amitié pour Wagner a conservé tout le caractère d'une noble passion.*
>
> *A un moment donné (il y a de cela une dizaine d'années), j'avais rêvé pour Weymar une nouvelle période comparable à celle de Charles Auguste, et dont Wagner et moi nous étions les coryphées, comme autrefois Goethe et Schiller.*
>
> Liszt's Will (Sept. 1860).

Before we can make any further progress with our hero's history, it is essential to devote a chapter to the position of his most celebrated friend and champion. An attentive reader of their *Correspondence* can scarcely fail to be struck by the fact that Liszt is now all fire and flame for Wagner's cause, and then again is silent for months together, or practically so, with no apparent reason decypherable from these documents alone. That reason could only be dimly guessed, on the principle of "cherchez la femme," until a year or two ago, when Liszt's letters to the Princess Carolyne Sayn-Wittgenstein were first made public property. From these it now is manifest that his fits of seeming lukewarmness must be largely attributed to the jealousy his princess shewed towards an excessive preoccupation with "the institute," in other words, the Weimar Court-theatre.

At that theatre itself Liszt's position was anomalous. Properly to grasp it, we must politely request the lady to wait while we go

back to somewhere about four years before he met her. For there were *two* reasons for Liszt's eventually settling down in Weimar.

In October 1842, the month of *Rienzi's* production at Dresden, Fate so willed it that Wagner's future comrade should be wooed by the Court of Weimar, where he happened to be performing for the moment, in the midst of one of his triumphal progresses. Unable to induce Mendelssohn to confer the lustre of his name upon the tiny Residenz, Maria Paulowna determined to secure another magnate in the world of art. The glory of a *name* appears to have been the chief desire of this sister of the Autocrat of all the Russias, whose personal taste for music did not soar much higher than a courtly dalliance with the pianoforte. To her husband the Grand Duke—who, unlike his father, cared little for these things—the acquisition would be represented as an easy mode of carrying on the traditions of the sanctuary of Goethe and Schiller at no particular expense. Liszt himself was evidently attracted neither by the title of Court-conductor, nor by the insignificant emolument, but by the opportunity of engaging in a branch of art he seems to have left uncultivated until then. So the decree was signed by Carl Friedrich of Weimar on November the 2nd, 1842, appointing "pianoforte-virtuoso Dr Franz Liszt our Kapellmeister in Extraordinary." His salary, a point he characteristically had left entirely to the Court's discretion, was to be a modest 1000 thalers (£150) per annum, in return for which he was supposed to pass two autumn months at Weimar in addition to Maria Paulowna's February, during which time the Grand Ducal band was to be under his orders. Not till 1844, however, did he enter on his duties, with a series of four orchestral and four chamber concerts. Still at the height of his virtuoso-triumphs all over Europe, his Weimar ties sat lightly on him, and his occasional visits cannot have amounted to three months in all until the year of crisis, 1848.

In the middle of 1844 had come his final parting with the Comtesse d'Agoult ("Daniel Stern") the mother of his three children. Those children he had legitimised immediately after their birth, and now entrusted to the care of his own mother in Paris. His pianoforte-tours had mainly been undertaken with a view to providing for them. For his own part, he longed for nothing so much, as to devote himself in peace to the higher

calling of his art, to compose and conduct great works. Of agitation, conquest and excitement, his life had been full; but there remained in it an aching void, a void which nothing but the love of a pure and noble-hearted woman could fill.

In 1847, his five-and-thirtieth year not long completed, he found that love. The whole remainder of his life is graven with the name of "Carolyne." For his good or ill, who shall venture to say? Where an influence is so despotic as almost to merit the name of obsession, one is apt to forget that its subject may thereby have been saved from influences less benign. That Liszt would have left us compositions more virile in their individuality, had he not committed his whole soul into the hands of a woman; that his writings would have gained in critical value, had the pen of a dilettante not had so large a share in them; that his efforts for the Theatre, and for Wagnerian Drama in particular, would have been wider in their scope and more continuous in their energy, had he not been allied at home with one who lacked the true dramatic instinct—all this is possible. On the other side of the page, he might have drifted away from his art altogether, or been lost in the shoals of that "ill-regulated life" from which he is never tired of thanking Carolyne for having rescued him.

An exceptional woman, this Princess Carolyne Sayn-Wittgenstein; as exceptional as the nature of their union. Look at her portrait in L. Ramann's *Franz Liszt*, reproduced from a daguerreotype that stood for nearly forty years on Liszt's writing-table. There is nothing beautiful about the face—on that point all her friends agree—except the eyes; any more than there was aught bewitching in the figure, with its spasmodically hasty movements. The nose and mouth are over-large and manlike; the jaw is square, and somewhat grim; the forehead high, but has it breadth?—hair plastered low about the temples denies an answer to that question all-important with the head of anyone who makes for intellectual sway. But those eyes, those "yeux de griffon," as Liszt calls them—there is the secret of the woman's mastery. Large, full, dark, lustrous eyes, set deep in sockets as of marble; those eyes are at once appealing and enthralling, majestic, eloquent alike of devotion and command.

To command had Carolyne Iwanowska been bred from childhood. Thirty-thousand are said to have been her father's serfs

in Poland, and she was his only child and heiress; from him had she early learnt the practice of benevolent despotism, together with a passion for more abstract subjects.* Through her mother, with whom she spent one half of every year—her parents living separated—she learnt such smattering of the arts and sciences as could be picked up in the salons of all the capitals and fashionable watering-places in Europe. Such was the twofold foundation on which her own alert intelligence soon raised a superstructure of loquacity which Bülow characterises thus in 1850: "She talks for hours on end, scarce allowing her interlocutor half a minute for reply." After two months' acquaintance Liszt denotes her to a friend as "not the smallest mesh of a blue-stocking"; but in the act of repeating this to her, he adds, "Talk to him 'treatise of strategy,' just as you regaled myself with 'treatise of instrumentation.'" She knew a little of most things, and played her polymathia off to such a tune that Liebig, for instance, exclaimed to Liszt one day, "I never met such a woman. In an hour she will pump the best-informed of experts dry" (Oct. '67); whilst on another occasion Liszt tells her, "Notwithstanding the 'profound feeling of ennui' inspired in you by the 'German,' you are the first to draw a glutton's profit from whatever Savants cross your path—provided they are of good enough paste to let themselves be questioned without end on Brahma, Vishnu, the stars of lesser magnitude, the superposition of strata, and so on" (July '53); and yet again, Liszt has met at Loretto an encyclopædic Abbé, who "told me that in a quarter of an hour you examined him in Buddha and Napoleon, the mysteries of theology and the figures of the budget. This strange fashion of treating him as a schoolboy, while you reserved exclusively to yourself the supreme decision on every question, had much upset him" (July '68). In literature, though her reading ranged from Homer to Hegel, her predilection for the French is manifested by a love of phrase: "Il est plus facile d'avoir du génie qu'un goût parfait" is one of her flashy apothegms, or favoured quotations, combated by Liszt (who now and then allowed himself that liberty) with his own far deeper observation, "Le goût est chose négative et le génie affirme et affirme toujours." Bon-mots he is always hunt-

* "At the age of 15, I believe, you had drawn up a constitution for Poland," Liszt writes to her in January 1874.

ing up for her, visibly against his inclination, and the doings of the diplomatic world are her never-failing source of interest—making one curious to know how she felt when Wagner replied through Liszt to her query concerning Ortrud, "A political *woman* is horrible." In matters of plastic art her opinion seems to have been valued by some good judges; for Preller repeats to Liszt in 1867 a remark made by the great painter Cornelius shortly before his death, "From time to time in my long career I have met distinguished, even superior, women—but none of them can be compared to Princess Wittgenstein for depth of sentiment and quickness of artistic perception." Add to all this a fanatical devotion to the Church of Rome, with a tenacious zeal for proselytising, and we have the picture of a lady whose various attainments were bound to exercise great fascination over a world-travelled but inerudite artist like Liszt, who repeatedly describes his own nature as "Franciscan-Bohemian."

And she was a good woman too, unspotted, true and staunch, with generous impulses and an immitigable belief in her "mission." Joan of Arc would she fain have played to a genius—with the proviso that his crown must be imposed by *her*. In years to come, she would have chosen for its form a cardinal's hat; but in this direction her ambition had to rest content with that minor tonsure which Liszt may figuratively be said to have accepted at her hands nearly two decads before the Church conferred it on him (1865) with the title "Abbé."

Just turned seventeen (1836), she married at her father's behest an impecunious younger son of a Russo-German prince, by whom she had her one and only child, a daughter (1837). Prince Nicolaus von Sayn-Wittgenstein, seven years her senior, had been attracted by the heiress, not the woman. When, after her father's death, she refused to liquidate her husband's reckless debts, their union terminated in all but outward form. This was the position of affairs in February 1847, when Franz Liszt, on a virtuoso-tour, arrived at Kieff, where the great land-owners of Southern Russia were wont to assemble at this season of the year for the transaction of business. In spite of her reputation for niggardness, the princess gave 100 roubles for a seat at a charity-concert; an act of generosity that prompted a visit of thanks. Liszt called; they talked; she conquered. The programme of that charity-concert was preserved by Carolyne till her dying day. An invitation to

her Polish home, Woronince, accepted; a rendezvous at Odessa; renewed invitations and visits; before the year is out, she has made her declaration that she cannot live without him. On Good Friday of that fateful year Liszt had written her: "A singular coincidence touches my superstitious vein. The first of January this year was a Friday; the 2nd of April, the feast day of my patron saint, happens to be Good Friday; and the 22nd of October, my birthday, will also be a Friday!" When Carolyne declared to him her love, with her determination to seek a divorce to enable her to bear his name, that coincidence may have recurred to Liszt's mind; for, according to her own account,* he turned deadly pale, and again and again exclaimed "A rich princess and a poor artist—it cannot, cannot be!" Liszt was right, as concerns the marriage. Though Nicolaus Sayn-Wittgenstein, a protestant, obtained his divorce and married again, Carolyne remained his wife in the eyes of the Roman Church. Fourteen years after her proposal to Liszt, when every obstacle seemed at last removed, the Pope forbade their marriage on the very eve of its celebration, and not even her husband's death in 1864 could remove from her mind the sense of a Divine refusal.

In 1847 the cumulative force of all its three-and-fifty Fridays could not turn the princess Carolyne from her purpose; to herself had she vowed Liszt's life. At the next Kieff gathering she sold sufficient of her lands to represent her personal dowry of a million roubles; in April 1848 she crossed the Russian frontier, never to return. With her daughter, Marie, then aged eleven, she joined Liszt in Austria at a castle of his ill-starred friend's, Prince Felix Lichnowsky. In June we find her temporarily established in what turned out to be her Weimar residence till 1860.

All things considered, no better choice than Weimar could possibly have been made. From the wrath of Tsar Nicholas it was natural to seek refuge with his sister Maria Paulowna; the Grand Duchess's protection would be the most unanswerable reply to prurient scandal; whilst Liszt's court-appointment would lend official sanction to what was regarded by both parties, from first to last, as the most sacred of betrothals. And valiantly did Maria Paulowna stand up for her right of protection, though she

* L. Ramann's *Franz Liszt als Künstler und Mensch*, II. ii, 28.

was unable to prevent her brother yielding to the whimperings of Nicolaus Sayn-Wittgenstein that Carolyne had "robbed him, not only of his daughter, but also of all means of subsistence." The Tsar ordered the rebellious princess back to Russia, to be reconciled with her lawful husband—to feed the poor spendthrift; for her disobedience to this ukase, her extensive estates were sequestered, one-seventh being assigned to her pauper husband, the remainder to his eldest brother in trust for their daughter. The revenue of the trust was to be paid to Carolyne for the girl's education and maintenance, but how little of it reached her, may be judged from a letter of Liszt's in Easter 1851: "Of what infamous malversations and machinations they are making you victim! 8000 silver roubles reduced to zero!! It is incredible."

Accustomed all her life to living *en grande dame*, Princess Wittgenstein's establishment at the Altenburg on the Jena road may have appeared to her a beggarly thing; nevertheless with a million roubles as realised capital (considerably over £100,000) it can scarcely have been that "poverty" of which we hear complaints—a poverty that in 1850-51 could ear-mark 5000 thalers (£750) as a contribution to the Goethe-foundation, or, failing that, to a Catholic church. To Liszt, on the contrary, the Altenburg must have been a heavy charge. So soon as he took up his residence in a wing thereof, he could not deign to live upon the charity of his companion. What proportion he may have contributed to the household expenses, does not concern us; but there are indications in the letters aforesaid that, compared with his means, it was no light one; for his virtuoso-receipts were ended now, and he had a mother and three children to support.

Let us gain some idea of this "Altenburg," whose name, no doubt, has made it figure as a palace in the minds of many.

When Princess Wittgenstein first came to Weimar in 1848, the building appears to have been let out in flats. Not contemplating any permanent abode before her expected divorce and marriage, she hired the first floor for herself, her daughter and attendants; Liszt may even now have taken the ground-floor of the barn-like wing as his private study, but does not appear to have installed himself as regular resident till about the autumn of 1850. The house then belonged to private owners;

in 1851 the Grand Duchess bought it,* in order that its tenants, or rather, its sole lessee—the princess having meanwhile spread herself over the whole building—might run no risk of annoyance. By no means a baronial mansion. Returning to it alone from Eilsen in January 1851, Liszt writes to Carolyne: "There is not much danger of my being torn from these walls! Their exterior is ugly enough, mean and vulgar—but within they have I know not what of serious peace, as it were a calm and beneficent smile, communicated to them by you, that penetrates me." Plain and ugly indeed was the building, without the smallest pretence to architecture. Three storeys high (not reckoning the attics), nine windows broad, and five deep, the house looks like a factory or barrack. As for its interior, L. Ramann describes at great length the various roomy salons packed with art-treasures, the trophies of Liszt's tours, and his unique collection of manuscript scores and musical instruments; here were to be found Beethoven's last Broadwood, Mozart's spinet, and a giant compound of pianoforte and organ expressly built for Liszt by Alexandre of Paris. Here, as time rolled on, the charm of Liszt's personality and the conversational powers of the princess drew around them a brilliant circle representative of all the arts, the sciences, and the diplomacies; whilst the rising musical generation was lodged and entertained in the many vacant chambers, often for months at a stretch—Hans von Bülow, for instance.

But the chamber that made the Altenburg historic was the "blue room" of the wing, Liszt's work-room, sheltered by the silence of a thickly-planted garden. Furnished with the utmost simplicity, containing little more than a grand pianoforte, some music-presses, a couple of sofas, a table or two, and *two* writing-desks, it was here that Franz wrote his music, and here that Carolyne assisted him with his correspondence and literary essays. At one end it led into Liszt's bedroom, plain as the cell of an anchorite; at the other a door communicated with a tiny oratory, equipped with nothing but a saint's image, a crucifix, and two faldstools. From Liszt's study all intruders

* In March, 1848 (before Carolyne's arrival) the Hereditary Grand Duke had been desirous that his father should follow the precedent of Carl August toward Goethe, and build a house for Liszt in the Grand-ducal park.

were debarred by Carolyne's strict orders, that he—more often, they—might work in peace. By the end of 1850 she had constituted herself his gaoler.

A *persécution amoureuse*—a loving persecution. Without a shadow of reproach, nay, rather as the highest eulogy, Liszt himself applies the term to Carolyne's surveillance, when he quotes to her (in 1867) from a letter of de Maistre's about that author's wife: "Une certaine persécution amoureuse, au moyen de laquelle il lui est donné de tourmenter ses enfants du matin au soir, pour faire s'abstenir, apprendre—sans cesser d'être tendrement aimée." Tormented from morning to night, to make his nature less rebellious to her hand! It certainly was not a healthy atmosphere for a man of his capacity to live in,* even had this Princess Carolyne been a very Hypatia. She had given up much (including much mental misery) to follow Liszt, and the mere suspicion of a thought that he might drift away, and leave her shelterless, must have been unbearable to one who could claim him by no legal right; but Liszt was gradually constrained by her exactingness, and his own quixotic adoration, to give up infinitely more than she—to wit, himself and all his natural élan.

In the first fever of youthful love, when the outer world melts into nothingness, such entire absorption of the male in the female may be the ideal state; but when, during a brief absence after four years of almost uninterrupted communion, a woman aged 32 asks a man on the brink of 40 such a question as the following, it can be classed as nothing but moral slavery, or the inquisition of the confessional box. In February 1851 Liszt writes: "You ask me in your letter of to-day, 'What is your first thought on waking, the first care of your day?' Eh! are you not as sure of it as if you touched it with your finger?—You, and again you, and you without ceasing!" Nor is it mere feminine jealousy; it is a jealousy of any intercourse, or any

* It was the very opposite of what Liszt's temperament really needed, in whatever light we regard the following lines—written on his fifty-sixth birthday, "the second I have passed afar in 20 years":—"Vous avez été toujours mon bon ange, et le peu de bien qui est en moi, je vous le dois. Depuis l'enfance, mon sentiment de la vie a été triste—et celui de la mort, doux! Ma véritable nature, c'est la passion du martyre—vous seule m'avez ainsi compris!"

occupation, that might possibly distract his mind from herself and the course she has laid down for him. It is positively painful to find a genius of the stamp of Liszt obliged to excuse himself to his duenna for devoting a little of his leisure to a man of the calibre of Adolf Stahr: "At anyrate this intercourse only takes up my hours of dinner and supper—and your recommendations as to the employment of the hours of my day are sacred to me." That was May 10, 1851. Two days previously he had written her: "You thought of writing to Szerdahély to discover what I do at various hours of the day. But I have told you, and you might have guessed it without my telling you. I read your letters, and drag myself like a spectre through these rooms, where my Chrysostom no longer speaks."

From beginning to end, Liszt is "always on his knees before her," as he repeatedly assures this worshipped lady through a score of years. To judge by these letters—were they not in themselves the strongest of proofs to the contrary—one would imagine that *he* was the mediocrity and she the genius. One of her favourite names for him appears, from them, to have been "Fainéant." As a ridiculously incongruous joke, that may pass; but when it comes to his cherishing another of her appellations, "crétin," we feel indignant that his touchingly sublime submission should ever have been put to *such* a test.* Love, to him, indeed was a school of humility, and none save the most angelic of dispositions could thus have kissed the rod. If *he* makes a suggestion, her superior intellect flouts it: "Arch-fool that I am, to imagine I could do aright, in doing otherwise than you desire. You have this advantage over Homer himself, whom Horace permitted to nod at times—that you never lose your wakefulness over a single iota of your smallest commands. In my stupidity, I innocently believed it would be better not to bemuse the brain of Magnet † with Spain and Sweden at one gulp. But no! You insist on Sweden, and here it comes" (May 7, '51).

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* In the Appendix will be found a letter, written toward the end of Liszt's life, bearing witness alike to the princess's intellectual arrogance and to the enormous erudition (in ecclesiastic matters) she had by then both amassed and turned to literary use.

† Pet name of her daughter, Marie, then aged about 14, whom Bülow called "the good fairy of the house."

His own literary studies, too, she prescribes for him; so that at last he cries in all sincerity: "When I come to reflect on everything, I ask myself if it was not you who once presented me my eyes and hands—and if it is not you who wind up every night the clockwork of my heart" (Jan. '51). Even with the course he is to follow in his music Carolyne would seem to have interfered; Carolyne whose sensitive ear found the peacock's screech agreeable (Aug. '61). To her alone is surely due the conception of that misty scheme for which she once desired to set aside a sum equivalent to £3000, namely a diorama of Dante's *Divina Commedia* accompanied by illustrative music; at all events, though his biographer gives the tale on Carolyne's authority, not a word does Liszt ever breathe on such a monstrosity in any of his letters dealing with the *Dante* symphony. We know that in 1863 she induced him to decline an operatic libretto, after he had finally obtained one completely to his liking;* wherefore we may conclude that she is taxable with our hearing nothing further of that *Sardanapalus* he had nearly finished a dozen years before (see his letters to Wagner of Oct. '49 and Jan. '51), as also with his polite rejection of the *Wieland* draft after Wagner had sent it, by her own request, for the princess to inspect (Oct. '50). Lucky that Carolyne knew nothing of the science of music—or we should have had her meddling with Liszt's actual notes. As it is, he writes Feb. '51 about Schumann's *Genovefa*, "This pianoforte-score has been made by *Clara*, whose name appears on the title-page. I have thought that this would be a fresh subject of jealousy to you"; and La Mara, the editor of these letters, adds, "The princess envied Clara Schumann, in that the latter's musical gifts enabled her completely to share in her husband's vocation." What might have been encrusted on Liszt's musical works, had Carolyne but learnt the art of counterpoint, or seriously applied herself to a "traité d'instrumentation," one trembles to think.

It was no improbable contingency, since there is not a single literary work of Liszt's Weimar period—seven-eighths of his Collected Writings—in which the princess had not at least a finger. 'Tis a thousand pities, for the value of æsthetic criticism

* "Janko" by Mosenthal, afterwards set to music by Rubinstein under the title *Die Kinder der Haide*. See letter to Carolyne Feb. 20, 1869.

depends immensely on the judge's personality: if Swinburne, for instance, ranges the plays of Shakespeare in a certain order of merit, that verdict must carry more weight than if it had been delivered by the Bishop of the Leeward Isles. Had Liszt simply submitted his rough manuscript to the file of a stylist, to free it of obscurities and redundancies, it would have been another matter; but the opposite was here the case. His own literary style was exquisite in its directness and simplicity, as we know at last from these letters themselves (where Carolyne *cannot* have aided); unfortunately, he was too modest to be pleased with it, and jumped at his princess's offer to adorn it with her pinchbeck tropes. The lady's high opinion of her own ability is reflected from his answers to her letters.* In his eyes she was a paragon of all the talents: "How just and charming, that comparison of yours! Mon Dieu! what wit you have, what grace and high originality, beside that *genius* of a heart of yours!" Most people, after receiving such incense once, would have begged the worshipper to burn no more; but Carolyne apparently demanded it, and year after year we find her cavalier indulging her with flattering commentaries on her niceties of phrase.

If the reader is anxious for a specimen of unadulterated Carolynian, let him take this from her Christmas letter to Wagner, 1855: "Pour les poètes qui vivent dans les régions tropicales où la passion étend sa floraison gigantesque, et ses merveilles sidérales, les Alberne Leute sont comme les moustiques infimes qui impatientent et mordent jusqu'au sang parfois, sans parvenir à troubler l'enchantement de cette nature luxuriante." Even Liszt has a sly dig at it, on an infrequent mental holiday. Apropos of a series of articles by Ambros on his *Graner Messe*, "He commences by citing Sesostris, which will please you" (March '58).† On another occasion he archly quotes George Sand, on their "Vie de Chopin un peu exubérante de style, mais remplie cependant de très bonnes choses et de très belles pages." The *Vie de Chopin* and *Les Bohémiens* are universally reproved for this "exuberance of style," this straining

* Her own to him have not been published, though a *few* examples might have been welcome.

† Princess Wittgenstein had once gone back to Eve for a parallel with Wagner's Elsa.

after "fine pages" at the expense of truth of drawing: these are the works in which the princess claims the lion's share. Liszt's analyses of *Tannhäuser*, *Lohengrin* and the *Flying Dutchman*, dissatisfy precisely where psychology is attempted—for example, that breaking of a butterfly in the laboured gloss upon the first scene between Erik and Senta; and there the pen of Carolyne is so palpable that one may swear to it—and at it.

The history of *Lohengrin et Tannhäuser* will demand our subsequent attention. For the present let us profit by a hint or two as to the mode of this collaboration.

On the authority of Carolyne herself, L. Ramann tells us: "Liszt would dictate, or make over his ideas and line of thought for her elaboration; or again, they would discuss a subject together, and the princess then turned the résumé of the discusssion into an essay or chapter. During the dictation or discussion, Liszt would stride up and down the room; or both would work away at their writing-desks, shrouded in dense clouds of smoke from their seldom-extinguished cigars. All the purely-musical part Liszt wrote himself, as for instance their article on the *Harold* symphony [with obvious flamboyant additions by Carolyne, however]. Much, on the other hand, is to be assigned exclusively to the princess. In the book on Chopin she furnished the chapter on Polish national fêtes and dances; in the essay on the *Flying Dutchman*, among others, many an analogy with poetry and the plastic arts was 'touched in' by her, to quote an expression used by Liszt himself. . . . She was by nature a lover of space, which harmonised with her long stride in walking; Liszt, on the contrary, keeps his bow on the stretch"—i.e. he makes use of short sentences without any bombast, for he himself deplores to Carolyne his "pauvre style haché," though it is worth a hundred of her confections. We also have first-hand testimony not only in the comprehensive "our" so frequently occurring in his letters, but in the explicit request addressed to her, May '51: "I have a piece of work for you. It is a matter of collecting biographic material relative to *our Schubert*. So please favour me with a list of inquisitive questions, such as you know so well to pose—in order that we may set to work in course of this summer." The article on Schubert never came off; but that is neither here nor there: most intimate collaboration is established at the epoch that chiefly concerns us now. Finally we have a

retrospect which shews that Liszt and Carolyne did not invariably see eye to eye in their joint productions: in 1872 he writes to her, "I often regret the time of our intimate collaboration for Brendel's modest journal [*Neue Zeitschrift*], our articles on Franz, Schumann, Berlioz, Chopin, Meyerbeer, our disputes on literary exigencies, etc., etc. Fate did not permit us to continue that useful and honourably militant task." How those "disputes" had always ended, we know from the result: the articles bore Liszt's name in print, but they were 'signed all over,' as the art-dealers say, with the "exuberant style" of Princess Wittgenstein.

My sole object in the preceding general sketch has been to shew that from the very beginning of Wagner's friendship with Liszt there was a third party, and a very imperative third party, to reckon with. Not till much later, did Wagner realise the position of affairs; the stricter Altenburg régime had scarcely commenced when he passed through Weimar on his way to exile; and Liszt was none of those who commit the secrets of their inner heart to others' care. In fact, until the recent publication of these letters, Liszt's nearest relatives must have been unaware of the full extent of that self-surrender which threw a chill even upon his natural affections.

Before passing to its immediate results, however, it is right that a few words be devoted to the nature of this union.

"Mon âme vole à toi, tantôt comme un encens, tantôt comme un orage." That quotation—evidently a favourite one, since it recurs later on—is the only instance of the second person singular in the whole of this collection of upwards of 1250 letters. Not that "tutoyer" presented difficulties to Liszt's pen, for we encounter it in some of his letters to another correspondent, and he had made the French tongue his principal vehicle of speech for over twenty years. No: the "vous" consistently addressed to Carolyne, even when the "hurricane" gains the upper hand of the "incense," is positive proof that passion was never allowed to take possession of more than heart and head.

Six weeks before the princess left her Russian home to join her lot with his, Liszt had written her in 1848, "Is it to live, is it to love, to feel and think with so much anguish as I feel?"

Early in 1851 she has unearthed a packet of old love-letters, once sent him by some earlier charmer: Liszt answers her, "'The serpent that writhes in your heart' has more powerful seductions even than that which tempted our mother Eve. I am quite desolated that you should have put your nose into these sheafs of correspondence, and authorise you to burn all you wish; for me it has long since been nothing but a past of ashes. Alas! Long before Odessa I had lost all title to play the rôle of jeune premier amoureux. That is all it would have needed, for you to put me, and with justice, out of doors. Human love is infinite in its tints and nuances—but the element proper to a certain class of love is *mystery*." A fortnight later: "What a miracle are your memories, dear Carolyne! And what need have you of mortals, intimate as you are with the mysterious marvels of creation? God loves and cherishes you, as one of those angels of predilection, and I prostrate myself before you, the better to love and adore Him. May the compassion of Heaven make me less and less unworthy of you. I sometimes feel so feeble, so broken, so full of heaviness."

That is the keynote of the whole series of epistles. Platonic love would be too cold a name for it. It is passion that refuses to soil itself even by a thought that might dethrone its idol, and breaks the heart-strings rather than permit the lips to swerve from a deferential "Vous!" It is magnificent, perhaps unparalleled save in the ecstasies of adoration of the saints; but for mortal man to mortal woman, living for years beneath one roof, it is tragic.

To gather in the meshes of our net, let us inquire how this union cast its shadow on that sphere of action which Liszt promised himself when he "dreamt for Weimar a new period comparable to that of Charles Augustus, of which Wagner and I should be the coryphæi, as erewhile Goethe and Schiller."

Eilsen, near Bückeburg, is a pretty little spa in the valley of the Weser, on the direct line of rail from Leipzig to Cologne, not far from Hanover, but over a hundred miles from Weimar. Liszt writes to Wagner thence, toward the end of October 1849, to the effect that he has been detained there for over a month by a serious illness of the little Princess Marie, but hopes to be back in Weimar by the beginning of December. He does not return

till about the middle of January 1850; and thus slips by the half of his second theatrical season, though the Weimar public is clamouring for a resumption of *Tannhäuser*, "impossible in his absence." Certainly Liszt had not pledged himself to undertake more than the duties of Kapellmeister in Extraordinary; but it is a bad start for the new epoch at Weimar, and Princess Carolyne is responsible for it.

In the summer of 1850, as we have seen, came the production of *Lohengrin*, with all the loving toil involved in its rehearsals. A holiday, of course, was needed after so much labour; but unfortunately that holiday, originally intended to cover some ten weeks or so at Eilsen, was prolonged and prolonged until it grew into an effective absence of twelve months, Liszt's third theatrical season at Weimar being reduced to two obligato visits of a few weeks each.* First, Liszt himself fell ill; but as he declined to be an invalid for more than a fortnight, and by then had only been a month at Eilsen, that would have made no difference in his original plans. Next, the princess's daughter was laid up again, requiring very careful nursing. Finally the princess herself was prostrated by grief at the loss of her mother, and refused to leave her bed for many weeks.† A long tour of recuperation accounts for the remainder.

An idea of the life to which Liszt was condemned at Eilsen may be gleaned from his letter of Jan. 23, '51, to Carolyne, whom he has just left for the first of his two respites at Weimar. "The Grand Duchess gave me an audience this morning. After a few graceful compliments, she inquired 'The princess Marie has been seriously ill?' . . . Suddenly, interrupting my details of the malady, she asked, 'And the Princess herself?'—'She weeps, Madame,' I answered her, 'She weeps and suffers.' . . . In the evening the Grand Duke and Duchess questioned me about Bückeburg. In the foreground I placed the Princess Carolyne and her system of education, and amused myself by cutting a sufficiently animated silhouette of the monotonously vegetative

* Departure Oct. 20, 1850; first return, Jan. 22 to Feb. 18, '51; second return, Apr. 4 to May 20; final return, Oct. 12, '51.

† One biographer talks of "typhus fever," another of rheumatism; but Liszt's letters, with their reference to "tétanos perpétuel," combined with an absence of any signs of real alarm, all point to a protracted nerve-storm.

life of the sovereigns of the place. 'But in what does one interest oneself there?—In nothing!—What does one do there?—Nothing! —What taste do they cultivate?—None.' After a few moments of silence: 'Pardon, Madame; not to be unjust, I ought to remedy an involuntary lapse of memory. They do much paste-boarding (*cartonnage*), both sexes in fact, and take an appreciable interest in it.' You may imagine the Grand Duchess's smile." The "paste-boarding" would seem to have been a game of double Patience, for Liszt writes to Carolyne a few days later: "If you knew how much I miss our Eilsen, those beautiful mornings, my few hours of true liberty in work, our games of 66. . . . Truly there is an unhappy contradiction between my tastes, my needs, my natural vocation and the obligations of my outward career, the almost inevitable distractions caused by the renown and the position thrust upon me. That contradiction I sometimes feel with affliction, and in ordinary it fills me with fatigue and an indescribable languor." A spell must indeed have been woven round the man who had lately exhibited such energy; for, beyond a collection of pianoforte studies revised, and perhaps a couple of Hungarian Rhapsodies, Eilsen has little to shew in the way of "work," apart from that joint *Fondation-Goethe* pamphlet (pubd mid-Feb. '51) and the proof-correcting of the *Vie de Chopin* (*France musicale*, commencing Feb. '51).

The Eilsen life was one of tears and nerve-explosions. Returned there ten days previously, Liszt writes to Wagner, March 1, '51, "From the heading of these lines you will guess in what trouble and distress I have been living for months," and ends with "Fare well, and happier than I." From the letters addressed to Carolyne in those two brief intervals of separation we can reconstitute for ourselves the constant strain of agitation: "I hope you have become a little calmer, for how is one to live in this state of burning fever and perpetual tetanus?" "Try to weep less, if it be possible to you." "My life and soul are entirely dissolved in my love, love absolute and infinite. But for pity's sake, and in the name of that love, restrain yourself, get well, and calm a little your fevers of body and fevers of soul." And if a day goes by without a letter, she cries, "The links are broken!"

With his princess thus chaining him to her counterpane, how could Liszt make headway with the active side of his propa-

ganda? Only three performances of *Lohengrin* had been given when he left for Eilsen in October 1850. The work had not yet taken a grip on its audience: a little push was still needed. Yet no fourth representation occurred until April. Wagner is promised one, as also of *Tannhäuser*, "about the 28th of January." Not another word does he hear of it!* It is the more extraordinary, as Liszt signs himself "Lohengrin" in a letter to Carolyne of Jan. 31, and ends a later one with "Votre Lohengrin, auquel votre cœur fait un St Graal"—involuntarily reminding us of those words of the Knight's, "Schon sendet nach dem Säumigen der Gral." She is informed Feb. 5, "Till the 16th I shall have no opera to conduct, but *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin* will be resumed on your return"; yet their composer himself is not made acquainted with the postponement. Still stranger, perhaps, is the fact that Carolyne alone, not Wagner, is given the following piece of information Jan. 27: "At Frankfort they want to mount *Tannhäuser* for the month of April, and Schmidt (*Prinz Eugen*),† the new Kapellmeister, naturally addresses himself to me about it."

A singular situation. One might imagine that Princess Carolyne had acquired the performing rights of *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin*, had we not seen that she declined to be tempted into purchasing their scores. The performances are to wait for her return; when that return is deferred, and Liszt determines to hasten to her side awhile, he apologises (Feb. 9) for having "promised Zigesar to come back two days afterwards, since the institute really cannot do without me this winter, and willy-nilly I cannot get out of conducting *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin*, which have had to wait so long, shortly after the Grand Duchess's birthday." The institute *has* to get on without him, however, until next April; for Carolyne is as jealous of it as though it

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* Internal evidence demonstrates that no letter of this epoch has been omitted from the published correspondence.

† Gustav Schmidt, a young Weimar composer whose opera *Prinz Eugen* had been produced there Feb. 28, 1848 (within a fortnight of *Tannhäuser*), Liszt conducting.—The first that *Wagner* hears of the Frankfort request is next July, direct from Schmidt and his employers (see Letters 11 and 14 to W. Fischer). On their part, the Frankfort people were also dilatory, so that the first performance of *Tannhäuser* there did not take place till February 1853.

were a rival goddess. At the end of January, after telling her of his hopes of success for Raff's *Alfred*,* he breaks off into "But why should I speak to you of these things? They assuredly do not preoccupy me beyond the time I am obliged to give them. One thing alone is needful, as the *Imitation* says; for me that one thing is to love and adore you, and to render myself as little unworthy of you as possible." Feb. 16, two days before leaving Weimar to rejoin her: "For the love of heaven, do not fear being weighed against the institute and found too light, as you write me. Place a little trust in me." In April: "Notwithstanding Beck's illness, we must have *Don Giovanni* this week, and two concerts, and perhaps *Lohengrin* with a fresh rehearsal! There comes the institute again. Poor dear, you have been weighed, but found 'sweet and light' as the burden of love divine." Within a month the scale has dipped the other way again, for he writes May 4: "Why am I compelled to re-make Weimar, and submit one by one to the consequences, already inevitable, of my personal position? Why am I forced to be a *prétendu sérieux*, in antipathy to my tender, dreamy, eh! oblivious nature? When shall I be able to dream, write, compose, and love you, with a little peace?"

With his hands tied behind him by a deeper than domestic opposition to his efforts for the theatre, how could Liszt expect to overcome the apathy of a Court that needed rousing, the indifference of a public whom his Carolyne had taught him to contemn? In April he reports to her an interview with Maria Paulowna, who had expressed regret at the smallness of the audience at a performance of Berlioz' *Harold* symphony: "I told her point-blank, that 'As long as her Imperial Highness desired there should be music at Weimar, I would endeavour to make it, and as good music as possible; but that I had long since taken my bearings toward the Weimar public, which, at the best, forms nothing but an eroded zero.' An assertion they are accustomed to hear me make, and develop on occasion; but

* It was to have been produced on Maria Paulowna's birthday, Feb. 16, '51, but had to be postponed owing to the indisposition of Frl. Aghte; so that the production actually took place (March 10) in Liszt's absence, though he had been most anxious to return for "so important an event in Raff's career" (letter to Wagner, March 1).

which appears from time to time to cause a certain displeasure to Monseigneur, who would like nothing better than to behold in Weimar the best of all possible worlds." It was a mistake to treat one's environment so pronouncedly *de haut en bas:* Liszt had forgotten Wagner's admonition, namely that any public in the world could be educated if you only kept pegging away at it; he had listened too obediently to the superior intelligence of Carolyne, whom these letters prove to have had small patience either with theatre or public.

Yet, as soon as Liszt puts his best foot forward again, there really is something to be effected with this slighted Weimar. To prepare for the fourth representation of *Lohengrin* he hurries back on the 4th of April, and rushes from station to stage for a rehearsal; four and a half hours in the morning, three hours in the evening; then four or five hours on the 5th. That performance, fixed for the 6th, has to be postponed to the 12th, owing to a hoarseness of Beck's. The brief report on it to Carolyne says nothing further, save that Dr Härtel was present, but "did not give his opinion. When passing through Leipzig, you had occasion to observe his *discrétion un peu distraite.*" Härtel was sufficiently won over by the work, though, to consent to publish it a month or two later. When people of that stamp could be attracted to this tiny theatre, it certainly was worth the effort to improve one's audience.

The full benefit of this renewal of energy did not appear until the fifth performance, May 11, given at the express desire of the Hereditary Grand Duchess, for her first visit to the theatre after her confinement. The house filled full at last, and, as Stahr informs us in the Berlin *National-Ztg* (May 27-28, '51), the opera was rescued by the enthusiasm of the audience from a fate that seriously had threatened it last autumn—that of being laid on the shelf as a failure; thus repeating the history of *Tannhäuser* and its first four performances at Dresden, so slender was the thread on which hung the fortunes of Wagner's earlier dramas. Something had intervened, to rouse the curiosity of neighbouring towns such as Erfurt, Naumburg, and, still more important, of Leipzig—which latter place had sent a tolerably representative contingent of inquisitives, including David and Moscheles;

whilst from Halle came Robert Franz,* at Liszt's own invitation.

With characteristic modesty, writing to Wagner on May 17, Liszt attributes this "miracle" of a fifth performance in one season† "solely to the Court"; and in effect he writes to Carolyne on the 13th, "After the representation, which really was very successful, their Highnesses sent for me, to compliment me in their box, whilst a dozen people down below insisted on calling me before the curtain—a very laudable intention, to which I naturally did not respond." But he also tells her that the work had "made a definite sensation at last, even upon our Weimar natives," and rightly ascribes the general "access of interest, and even of enthusiasm" to "our" analysis of the opera that had appeared in the *Illustrirte Zeitung* just a month before.

There can be no possible doubt of it. An article covering seven folio pages of three columns each, with another whole page devoted to music-type, must in any case have drawn attention to the opera as something quite out of the ordinary. But when that imposing array of columns was headed by the magical name of F. Liszt, and blazoned with all the glowing epithets at the command of word-painting,‡ there was no resisting it. More than the original production itself, must this article have done to spread the fame of Wagner. Why, then, was its publication so

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* The opinion of this great master of the German *Lied* is among the most valuable of all contemporary judgments on the opera, since it was delivered in the first place in a private letter, with no idea of publication. Reproduced anonymously in the *Neue Oderzeitung* at the end of July '51, it was reprinted with Franz's full consent and name in the *Neue Zeitschrift* of March 26, 1852, from which I have translated it for the Appendix.

† There then was some talk of a sixth, according to this letter: "The day after to-morrow I must be off to Eilsen for the third time! I think of returning here, however, for Whitsuntide [June 8]. At the close of the season either *Tannhäuser* or *Lohengrin* will be repeated. The former work, I imagine, I now can leave to Goetze to conduct." The trials of Eilsen detaining him, Liszt did not return, and *Tannhäuser* was given June 28 with an effect which Hans von Bülow thus describes to him in a letter of the 29th: "Last night I heard *Tannhäuser*. Oh! how I missed your magic wand, the vivifying breath, the soul of this inanimate body." *Lohengrin's* sixth performance had to wait till January 1852.

‡ Not to mention some half-dozen well-meant woodcuts, perpetrated apparently by a journalistic hack.

tardy? The answer lies mainly at "Eilsen's" door; for, truth to tell, the *Lohengrin*-analysis was a highly composite affair, with an outer history as complex as its inner. It will not prove uninstructive to follow its windings in the light of both groups of letters, the Wagner-Liszt correspondence, and the more intimate epistles of Franz Liszt to Carolyne Sayn-Wittgenstein.

The first hint is contained in Liszt's letter to Wagner of Sept. 2, 1850, i.e. five days after the original production: "As soon as I shall have rested a little, I will set to work on the feuilleton, which will probably appear in the *Débats*." * The next intimation is conveyed in his oracular utterance of Sept. 16: "Completely to realise your idea of Drama, of which you have given us such magnificent examples in *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin*, it is absolutely necessary to batter down the old routine of criticism, the long ears and short sight of 'Philistia,' and the idiotic arrogance of that determinant fraction of the public which believes itself born with the right to judge all works of art"; where we seem already to hear another voice than that of Liszt alone. By the time he writes again to Wagner, Sept. 25, the actual analysis is well under way, for he says: "In a week's time I shall send you a *very long* article of my making (*de ma façon*) on Lohengrin. If *personal* reasons as regards yourself do not decisively oppose it there, it will appear in Paris during the course of October. . . . For me it is a point of honour to publish my opinion of your work—and if you should prove fairly content with my effort, perhaps you might do me a kindness that would not cost you more than a day or two of ennui; it would be to make a translation, revised, corrected, augmented and authenticated; which the obligingness of your friends and mine might get inserted in 2 to 3 numbers of the Augsburg *Allg. Ztg* (or in Brockhaus's paper) signed with my name." †

A singularity will be noticed in the wording of this announcement: Liszt does not speak precisely of an article by himself, but of "un article de ma façon," an ambiguity the meaning of which

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* Under the title "Fêtes de Herder et Goethe à Weymar" an article by Liszt did actually appear October 22, concluding with a few preliminary remarks on *Lohengrin*, and foreshadowing a sequel; but that sequel never came, in the *Débats*. For further particulars see Appendix.

† The alternative of its publication as a separate (German) brochure is also suggested.

we shall presently discover. Wagner, not being initiated into the secret, must have felt a little mystified by a sentence that brings this letter to its close: "As you will see for yourself, the style is French in its studiedness (*françaisement soigné*), so that it would be of great moment not to traduce its nuances of sentiment and thought in transposing them into another language." In that little sentence, tacked on as if an after-thought, we have an echo of the second voice we hear in almost all the letters penned by Liszt in French. * After the request that Wagner should revise and *correct* an appreciation of his own opera, there is something strangely inconsistent in the desire that every nuance of that appreciation should be faithfully preserved. Beyond dispute, this is not Liszt's personal stipulation; he was far too modest to address such a claim to the author of a masterpiece for which he has no words of praise too strong. In fact we find him subsequently begging Wagner (Oct. 18) to "translate freely, and ameliorate the article in making it complete. . . . Neither in this, nor in other matters, will you encounter any silly amour-propre in me." Whose amour-propre had it been, then? The Princess Wittgenstein's.

This is no conjecture. Long has it been rumoured that Liszt's *Lohengrin* analysis was only Liszt's in part—mainly, and there of course exclusively, the musical part. Now we know it for certain. Repeatedly does Liszt speak of the essay to Carolyne as "ours"; e.g. "notre brochure Lohengrin" in his letter of Jan. 23, 1851. Still more emphatic is the reference in a letter of four years later (May '55): "What adorable disputes we had at Eilsen àpropos of *Chopin*, *Lohengrin* etc., which were written there." † And there lies the work's weak side. Not that it does not display considerable literary ability, alike in plan and execution; for which, in common fairness, we must give the lady the principal credit. But wherever the plot and characters are lingered on, it is tinged with a "nuance," and sometimes far more than a

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* We have it on the best authority that Liszt scarcely ever sent off a letter, during the time they were living together, without at least submitting it for Princess Wittgenstein's approval.

† The *Lohengrin* analysis was really written just *before* the second stay at Eilsen; but its remanipulation to form the *Lohengrin et Tannhäuser* brochure, as also the correction of that brochure's proofs, would fall in the said period.

nuance, of Carolyne's perturbing idiosyncrasy. She has not yet gone the length she goes hereafter with the *Flying Dutchman*, namely of worrying at the situations as if they came straight from some French society-novel; but her conception of the characters is in many respects un-Teutonic, and often at variance with Wagner's story. What, for instance, can we say to the following characterisation of the heroine? "Thank heavens! we here have no female disputant, no *Indépendante* championing the Rights of Woman, and desiring to prove and pass judgment on everything. . . . Elsa never seeks in sonorous hexameters to enthrone the interests of her dignity." No: nor did Elsa milk the cows, or keep a boarding-school, or ride a bicycle—if it comes to that. All this sort of negative description is so much arbitrary padding,* wearisome to the reader's patience, and quite destructive of the mental picture.

Had Carolyne paid more attention to the drama she was dissecting, than to the wild vagaries of her fancy, she would have spared Liszt the responsibility for positive misconceptions of this Elsa: "So soon as ever the tempter stands ready to glut her curiosity, she sees the baseness of the error that has allied her to the doubt of hate and malice. She refuses now to know. She desires but to ignore. She feels the supremacy of her trusting ignorance, and, restored to the light and strength of her humble innocence, she defies the wretch who would teach her the know-

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* The passage in question, represented by pages 124 to 127 of Liszt's *Ges. Schr.* III. ii, does not appear in the *Illustrirte*, though it figures in the French brochure of 1851. Manifestly it was an afterthought, for on June 5 of that year Liszt writes to Raff, "Stahr's Lohengrin article has interested me much, and also caused me to write a few additions for my Lohengrin brochure"; three days later, "the alterations which I have made in the Lohengrin, as also the standpoint of my apology for Tannhäuser, perhaps will offer you a welcome opportunity for categorically running down Wagner's 'forsaken standpoint,' as you call it, together with my old-fashioned notions"; and a week or two afterwards, "Tomorrow I am sending Brockhaus the brochure 'Lohengrin et Tannhäuser,' which will probably incite you to a rousing attack. To me it will be quite welcome—and, as I told you in my last letter, I am perfectly willing to recommend your article, should there be a chance of its appearing anywhere" (*Die Musik*, April 1902). An instructive peep behind the scenes: even Raff, who did so much of the instrumenting of Liszt's musical works at this period, is not informed of the princess's collaboration in the literary department.

ledge of Good and Evil." There is no scene in Wagner's *Lohengrin* to which these sentences could properly apply; yet, if words mean anything, they refer to the scene in the bridal chamber, thus characterised a little later: "Her sublimity, when, abjuring in an instant her doubt and her mistrust, she renounces her claim to know the secret she had just implored, wills rather to defend its silence, and rushes to arm her spouse." The simple explanation of a spontaneous movement quite escapes the subtlety of this sophisticated mind. Nor does Lohengrin himself fare much better. "His love is coloured with the whole prismatic range of the stainless joys of the elect," though *Wagner* meant that love to be warm and human. As for his ultimate farewell, "In the accents of this resigned but inconsolable avowal there reigns a suffering that, one might almost say, feeds upon itself with sad delight." Poor Liszt—one mutters to oneself—to be chained to a princess who fed upon her sufferings with sad delight! *

A feminine hand is discernible in the similes with which this article is overladen. In vol. ii (p. 206) I quoted one, that of the lace-weaver, introduced to illustrate Wagner's mode of orchestration; it was a favourable specimen, though a trifle finnicking for such a theme. As a rule, however, these similes and metaphors are introduced with neither rhyme nor reason. Elsa, for instance, is compared to "a picture in which S. Margaret, with eyes humid in their crystalline purity and tender sweetness, is portrayed in the midst of loathsome reptiles that hiss and coil around the feet of the virgin martyr condemned to their deadly fangs." Lohengrin's narration in act iii is sicklied with the pale cast of "Words as thrilling and as penetrating as the evening exhalations of a full-blown orange-grove." The princess must have been remarkably fond of heavy odours, for this is how she paints the bridal chorus: "A train of knights and ladies, whose songs pervade the atmosphere like a cloud of fragrant incense, of nard, and myrrh, and cinnamon." These pastille fumes suggest far more the

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* Never were letters so full of "tears," as his to her. Take the following: "D'aujourd'hui en huit je serai à vos pieds, mon bon ange—et nous recommencerons à pleurer ensemble, ce qui est ma béatitude en ce monde." And that was written in October 1864, some months after the last obstacle to their marriage had been removed by the death of Prince Nicolaus Sayn-Wittgenstein.

boudoir of a dévote than the naïve strains of Wagner's epithalamium.*

The above must suffice to give a notion of the harm Liszt suffered when he allowed the simple dignity of his own methods of expression to be overborne by a dilettante with a passion for "belles pages," in other words "tall writing," but no true sense of depth or breadth. Nothing could be more striking than the contrast between these florid, often garish arabesques, and his own perspicuous exposition of Wagner's aims. Wherever the technical side of the union of music with drama is the theme, we have a criticism so luminous and withal so sane, that the bitterest opponent must have forgotten for a moment that it spelt nothing but praise. Wagner's own exegesis of his scheme of musical "motives," contained in *Opera and Drama*, had not yet been perused by Liszt; but Liszt has grasped it through his own artistic intuition, and sets it forth in terms so clear that he who runs may read. Well may we understand his friend's delighted exclamation, "To me it is as if two men had met, who, starting from the most opposite of sides, had clasped brotherly hands in the heart of art. Only in that joy can I accept your admiration without shame" (letter of Nov. 25, 1850).

The letter in which Liszt first asks Wagner to undertake the translation of this article from French into German is dated "Sept. 25." Strange to say, Wagner has not received that letter by October 2;† nor is this the only instance of chaos in the epistolary arrangements of the Altenburg. When Wagner has received it, he replies (Oct. 8) with the familiar words: "You make me blush! Without a blush I can scarcely read what you mean to tell the world about me—and you want me to be its

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* In the *Tannhäuser* analysis she has obviously interpolated into Liszt's account of the finale of act ii the words I here italicise: "Composed of male voices, led by one solitary soprano—*like a silver thuryble that sends aloft its heavy clouds of scented smoke*—it is filled with grave emotion, and breathes an air of religious devotion *such as one is only wont to hear in holy places*"; which jars upon us almost as much as the ascription to Tannhäuser's pilgrimage-recital of "so complete a science of toxicology"!

† He himself, though avoiding the railroad, had covered the distance from Weimar to Zurich in four days, a year ago; so that a letter might be expected to reach him in from three to four.

mouthpiece?" His blushes are prospective, of course, engendered by the bare idea of the "éloge très-entier, très-absolu" which Liszt has foreshadowed; for the analysis itself has not been sent him yet.

The fate of Liszt's next letter to him is quite extraordinary; but let us first take its substance: "For to-day, I am sending you by post the fair copy of my work on *Lohengrin*. As it is the only one I possess, I beg you to be so kind as to return it to me at *Eilsen* (Bückeburg), where I shall pass the months of November and December; for, in spite of the difficulties I know I shall encounter in the Parisian press as to the publication of an article developed at such length, and so sincerely eulogistic of a German opera and a German composer, in whose success nobody has a direct interest—far from it—I nevertheless do not absolutely despair of getting it inserted some fine day in some review—and consequently I shall need this manuscript. Meanwhile if you judge that my work is worth the trouble of being published in Germany, I repeat the prayer I have already addressed to you, to translate it freely and improve it in completing it." Liszt goes on to suggest Wagner's adding quotations from the text and music; finally, after dealing with other matters, "The day after to-morrow I shall leave for Eilsen, whither you will please address me until further information. Do not fail to send me back the manuscript of my article on *Lohengrin* (of which, in case of need, you could get a copy made at Zurich). I shall want it between the 5th and 10th November." The letter is written in French down to this point, but winds up with a German sentence in curious contrast to the chill formality preceding it: "Once more my hearty thanks for thy Wieland, and rest assured that *with* or *without* hammered wings of genius I ever remain thy faithfully sincerest friend, F. Liszt." Immediately thereafter comes the date in French, "Weymar, 18 Octobre 1850."

That little German postscript, or interpolation, has undoubtedly a tale to tell. Those words are Liszt's undictated own, in reparation for the frigidity which Carolyne has breathed over the rest of the letter. It is significant that she sends no personal message, though Wagner had despatched his *Wieland* draft to *her*. Can anything have offended the lady? Unfortunately, a possible cause of such offence is but too discernible. Wagner's letter

of October 8 to Liszt had concluded with a half-request for pecuniary assistance, breaking down in the middle of a sentence that could only be interpreted as an appeal to *her* purse. This is how he had put it: "Just another word—in strict confidence. By the end of this month I shall have got through all my money; Zigesar sent me less than you had led me to hope [*Lohengrin* fee]. With the new year I fancy I shall obtain a little support again from Frau Ritter of Dresden; but even that is uncertain. Can you——? Oh, what a thing to say! If it's a case of lowering yourself and me, you cannot—that I know! Things will right themselves somehow—God bless you—I imagine the Devil won't get me just yet." Had he boldly asked the lady herself, it would have been nothing so very outrageous, since she was infinitely better off than good Frau Ritter, and professed herself an equally ardent admirer. But the half-suggestion froze her up at once, for something like another year, and to that atmosphere we may partly attribute the negligence betrayed on Liszt's side of the correspondence (with Wagner) during the next few months.

As said, Liszt's letter of Oct. 18 has itself a singular history. Though he asks for the return of the French manuscript "between November 5 and 10," he does not send it off at once, but lends it first to Raff to read—surely not of his own free will! Now Raff himself was in love (with his future wife), in addition to numberless commissions to execute for his patron; and, by some inexplicable error, he sends alike Liszt's letter and the precious manuscript on a journey round the greater part of Germany. Wagner has to suffer for it; Nov. 25 he writes "Don't be cross with me for being so late with an answer to your last letter: I had at the same time to see to the return to you of the manuscript entrusted to my care; and that I could not do before. Your letter, it is true, was dated October 22, but—together with the manuscript—it only reached me on the 8th November, from Berlin."* It had reached him, accordingly, in the thick of most exacting labours at the Zurich theatre, labours

* There can be no doubt as to Wagner's referring to the letter published with the date "18 Octobre"; his whole reply is directed to that. He therefore would appear to have inadvertently taken the date from that issue of the *Débats* containing Liszt's "Herder-Goethe" feuilleton, for which he at the same time thanks him; unless we may suppose that *Raff* added a second date

interfering even with his own important work on *Opera and Drama;* so that it was a little over a fortnight before he could return the French original, with a promise that the German rendering shall follow "in a few days, so soon as it shall have received its proper form" (letter of Nov. 25). Owing to young Bülow's quarrel with the Zurich prima donna, and the consequent departure of himself and Ritter, those "few days" were unavoidably prolonged into a month, making it Christmas Eve before Wagner can despatch to Liszt the product of a multiple collaboration: "At last I am able to send you the translation of your essay. As it will be quite impossible for you to comprehend why it has taken so long, and you may even suspect me of lukewarmness towards your more than friendly purpose, I must tell you how it happened. I was so moved by your work that I felt that a thing so deeply concerning and encouraging to myself ought not to have myself for collaborator. I fell into the most shamefaced perplexity at the thought of writing out with my own hand the praise your supremely brilliant article dictated to me. I wavered and swayed, and knew not how to set to work. Then my young friend Ritter came to my rescue, and asked me to let him do the translating. I consented, reserving to myself the task of revision, less with an eye to my own praise, than to the restoration of your vibrant style. So Ritter and Bülow translated it together; then I went through it with them; finally R. set to work again, and now I lay the outcome of great care before you, begging you to accept this explanation of the long delay."* Liszt is then assured, and with justice, that he need not be ashamed to put his signature to the composite product, which remains his own to this extent: "Wherever you speak *about* the work and its author, this rendering contains nothing but an entirely faithful translation of the original, the most inconceivable

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—that of Liszt's birthday—before despatching the packet. As to the circuitous route viâ Berlin, it was as much an enigma to Liszt as to Wagner; for Liszt writes to Raff Jan. 6, '51, "Wagner received the packet all right, but from Berlin!" Raff's answer not having been preserved, the little riddle must remain unsolved.

* As Wagner is writing a fortnight after the young men's departure, Ritter must have taken the work away with him, to give it its finishing touches at S. Gallen; thus accounting for another portion of a by no means excessive delay.

pains having been bestowed on reproducing its uncommonly vibrant, original, and deeply artistic language as closely as its individuality and fulness would allow. Wherever, on the other hand, you simply indicate the story, or the material of scenes and situations, the translator has made bold to shew a little greater freedom."

That "freedom" had consisted chiefly in replacing the princess's psychological glosses by a less ornate and better-ordered narrative, with the assistance of copious extracts from the poem itself; and thus the German gained immensely by the omission of many an irrelevant simile etc., though we could wish the expurgation had been carried farther. Only one material change had been made in the general comments, namely the interpolation of Wagner's favourite parallel between the Hoard and Grail, with a reference to his *Wibelungen* essay.* To the faithfulness of the critical reproduction there could be no more striking testimony than the retention of no less than three † complimentary allusions to his bête noire, Meyerbeer. But what perhaps is the most noteworthy feature, is the superior fluency of this German version: the Wagner-Ritter-Bülow rendering is much easier to read, much shorter-breathed, than the original French—or rather, than the French of the brochure published a few months later. A more detailed comparison would be beyond the scope of the present survey, which I must conclude with a word of regret that more advantage was not taken of the Wagnerian version, were it only by indicating the principal variants, when this analysis was re-translated into German by yet another hand for appearance in Liszt's *Gesammelte Schriften* (anno 1881).

In proportion to Wagner's delight at having been "so fully understood, so fully recompensed for all his efforts, sacrifices and artistic combats," must have been his discouragement by Liszt's ensuing silence. On the 26th November, 1850, Liszt had anxiously inquired as to the fate of the French manuscript; but he *never* acknowledges its return in company with Wagner's

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* See Appendix. 490

† Out of four; the fourth may have been added by Liszt after the French manuscript came back to him.

(crossing) letter of Nov. 25. As for the translation itself, despatched on Christmas Eve, it is ten weeks before Liszt acknowledges receipt of that. This is partly to be explained by his quasi-domestic troubles at Eilsen; not entirely. Dec. 27, Wagner writes concerning the Brussels offer already dealt with (p. 80 *ant.*); Liszt answers Jan. 3, '51, incidentally remarking, "By repeated request I have decided to print my article on the Herder festival together with the analysis of Lohengrin, as a separate brochure. If you still have any observations to make about it, let it be soon, so that I may make use of them." To Wagner it must have been particularly chilling, notwithstanding the "Germany is your possession, and you its glory," contained in the same letter. He would naturally conclude that Liszt was answering his letter of the 24th, as well as of the 27th December.

So far, Liszt was only half to blame. He might have shewn a little warmer interest in the progress of the German version, to the extent of a direct inquiry; but he could not acknowledge receipt of what had not yet come to hand. For Wagner's letter of Christmas Eve had not been forwarded from Weimar, probably owing to the bulkiness of the package in which it was included with the German manuscript. The day after his return to his duties, Liszt writes to Carolyne, Jan. 23, '51; "Wagner has just sent me the translation of our brochure *Lohengrin*, accompanied by a long and infinitely flattering letter of apologies for this delay. By next post I will send you his letter. As for the German manuscript, I will see what is best to do with it." It is odd that Liszt should never have remarked the date; which would have told him that Wagner had really sent both letter and manuscript a month ago, thus almost halving "this delay." Equally odd is his expression "infinitely flattering"; which is scarcely what one might have expected in allusion to such heartfelt thanks, unless there were some need of reserve when speaking of a bosom-friend to jealous Carolyne.—Four days later, she is parenthetically informed of his plans for publication of the French analysis. After another five: "If you ask for it, I will send you the *Lohengrin* article as soon as it has been returned to me, together with Wagner's letter. But I fancy you may spare yourself the re-perusal in German of what we know by heart in French—and wait till the thing has appeared, which will be towards the end of

this month." That was Feb. 1. '51. On the 8th of the month: "The *Lohengrin* article will end, I believe, by appearing right-out in the Leipzig *Illustrirte Zeitung*—in exchange for which the editor will print me a hundred copies of the French version. . . . Yesterday I got Raff to write to the manager of the *Illustrirte*, and I suppose the thing will easily be arranged. . . . For to-day I send you Wagner's letter, which will completely reassure you as to the impression our work has made on him." So Liszt has not really forgotten Wagner; merely, through his absorption in Carolyne and her handiwork, he has forgotten that a friend in exile may be quite as anxious to be "reassured"; and, as time runs on, he has forgotten that in the first pressure of business resumed at Weimar* he forgot to write and thank him for what were infinitely more than formal compliments.

Now let us turn to the Zurich side of the picture. Liszt's explanation (Nov. 26) of the original delay in sending off the French fair copy—namely, "on my departure from Weimar I begged Raff to despatch it you after he had read it"—can hardly have been comforting; but Wagner had made no comment on the inconsistency of such a loan with the desire that this "only copy" should be returned by a fixed and early date. Neither had Wagner taken exception to the non-acknowledgment of that return, though he might fairly have taxed his friend with the omission. All he did, was to express concern in his Christmas letter, not only at Liszt's recent illness, but also at the "skidded mood (*gehemmte Stimmung*)" it seemed to have left behind it. As the weeks flew by, and he still received no answer, it is not

* Jan. 26 he writes to Carolyne: "On my arrival I found my table covered with musical correspondence, and my conferences with Zigesar are prolonged to infinity." On the 27th: "All sorts of little causes will probably prevent my writing you during the next two or three days. I am overwhelmed with duties: the continuation of the *Chopin* proofs, the shading of the piece which Raff must take to Leipzig, the rehearsal and court-concert of to-morrow, one or two rehearsals of *Alfred* at the theatre, this week—endless pourparlers with the musical company . . . on the top of it all, a dozen long letters to write, three of which will need a little style, for the Bach-foundation, and you know such letters unfortunately take me two hours apiece—divers other affairs and musical correspondence." In ten days, however, he has toiled through the arrears and is giving himself a "forced occupation" (Letter 64 to Carolyne); so that he really ought to have remembered his disconsolate comrade in Zurich.

surprising that he should have begun to fear a slackening of friendship. By February 18 (1851) he can endure his inner fears no longer, and gives them vent: "Have you all forgotten me? I have been so lonely, since a while, that I often grow afraid.—Can you possibly be cross with me for anything? . . . My pleasure in life is not great. Things are very still and lonesome round me—and I often feel as if dead and buried. But how goes it with yourself?—Are you completely restored to health?—I often dream of you and Weimar: weird, incoherent stuff." Dreams of a Weimar that was silent even on the subject of a promised resumption of *Tannhaüser* and *Lohengrin*. How could he guess that Liszt was quietly at work for him, at least as regards the publication of the laudatory article, when Liszt had left him wholly in the dark?

On the same day as that despairing cry, Liszt left again for Eilsen, to rejoin his invalid princess. Thither it followed him, and this time he hastens to answer; midst all the distractions of a sick-room, his conscience pricks him. "Never could I think of forgetting you; still less, if possible, of being cross with you," says this *German* letter, the language of Liszt's own mouth and heart to Wagner, as the French is that to Carolyne. "Forgive me for not having told you earlier my heartily sincere thanks for B. and R.'s German version of my Lohengrin-article. Your letter in particular rejoiced me deeply—and flattered me highly. That you are satisfied with this conception of that glorious masterpiece of heart and soul, your *Lohengrin*, to me is an exceedingly rich reward. Immediately after my return to Weimar I will see to its printing (perhaps the *Illustrirte* will take it in *one* number) and send you the proofs, which I beg you to correct and return direct to Weber as quickly as possible.—Ritter no doubt can go carefully through the article in one day, and despatch it by return of post to Leipzig.* As for the French original, I shall probably publish it as a separate brochure, with my *Herderfest*," and so on.

Wagner's fears are removed: "Heartily do I thank you for your letter, as a plain token of the continuance of your lively interest in me," he replies March 9, proving how grave had been his apprehensions. To this letter we must return next chapter,

* Liszt then anticipated his own return to Weimar by the 7th of March; he was also unaware that Ritter had gone to S. Gallen.

as it marks an important stage in the *Siegfried* project; but it also has a bearing on the present subject: "If you are obliged to tell me there is no present hope of a fee for composing my Siegfried, do see at least if you can make it possible to procure me a *little* money to go on with—just to give me breathing-space for a change of plan.—It is very *sad* that I should have to plague you with such odious requests." Not until Liszt has left Eilsen, and the atmosphere of his princess once more, does he reply articulately; for his next letter is dated Weimar, April 9: "I had to spend the whole of March in such trouble and worry that I never arrived at writing you." We know, from countless confessions to Carolyne, that letter-writing was to Liszt a most laborious task—contrary to what we should have imagined from the volumen of his correspondence; but surely in this instance his pen must have been stayed at her bidding. How else are we to interpret that other sentence of April 9: "Did you receive the hundred thalers?" Liszt's infinite delicacy of feeling would tell him that the bald despatch of a donation—through a banker?—must be a galling answer to a letter that had asked for definite news about the Siegfried scheme. Yet how could he otherwise assist his friend, while obeying his lady's wishes?—The next two paragraphs will demonstrate that Carolyne's embargo had to be circumvented at times.

This letter of Liszt's of April 9 shews him operating once more with his former energy, and of his own initiative. Immediately on his return to Weimar (Apr. 4) he must have taken measures for the prompt appearance of that article which had hung fire so long; for he says, "By this day's post I am sending you my Lohengrin essay [he always calls it "my" to Wagner], which is to appear in German first, in the Illustrirte Zeitung. Be so good as to correct the proofs *with the utmost despatch*—and send them by return of post direct to Weber of Leipzig. Most likely it will appear in the next number." His hurry is breathless now, for the article appears at least a day earlier than Wagner could possibly receive his letter.* Let the cause of that hurry remain in

* Highly puzzled is Wagner at receiving the *Ill. Ztg* of April 12, with the article itself as large as life, only a couple of days after the letter asking him to correct its proofs; for he ends his epistle of April 18 with the remark, "I am in doubt whether the proof-correction will still be needed? It has gone off to Leipzig, all the same." As previously noted, confusion appears to have reigned

abeyance a moment, since there is more in this letter than meets the eye: "The princess has remained at Eilsen, bedridden still, and I don't expect her here before the end of this month. You can hardly imagine the desolation into which her wearisome illness plunges me." The printed reproduction here breaks into dots, indicative of some more definite statement as to the condition either of Carolyne's health or of her temper; for Wagner answers it with pity for Liszt's domestic wretchedness, "the heartiest sympathy with the honoured lady's sufferings," and the symptomatic remark, "Dear, dear Liszt, only manage that *we* may manage to see one another for once! Perhaps the Swiss air would do the princess good: bring her here, and come with her"—it being evident that Liszt would hardly be allowed to come alone. "Bring her," indeed! It would never do to let Carolyne read that. No part of the message is delivered to her; nor, informed as she generally is of the tiniest detail, is she informed at all of the present interchange of letters. Incontestably she is piqued against Wagner just now, and Liszt considers that the less he writes about him the better.

Now we shall see how Liszt stole a march on his Calypso-duenna, when he got the German Lohengrin-analysis published in such hot haste. April 14 he writes her,* without any previous warning: "Apropos, our Lohengrin article has appeared in the Illustrirte Zeitung, but has not been sent me yet. Stör, Joachim, and others who have seen it, assure me that it makes a superb effect." On the 16th, "I am awaiting your return, to send the *Lohengrin* [French] to Brockhaus; there is no hurry about its publication. By to-morrow's post I will send you the Illustrirte, which I have asked for, but not yet received from Leipzig." By the 22nd he has unmistakably been called over the coals for acting without her consent, for he writes: "I am expecting the Illustrite with *Lohengrin* to-day. Your ideas on the German publication of this work assuredly lack neither reason nor that *longue vue* which is yours by nature. I admit there was something like a grain of Bellonianism in the empressement I put into the appear-

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in the Altenburg postal arrangements; to which it may be added that Liszt's bump of chronometry seems to have been poorly-developed, as yet. That would be a weighty factor in a series of complications trembling on the brink of serious misunderstanding.

.* Letter 78 to the princess, wrongly dated "11 Avril 51."

ance of our *Lohengrin* in the Illustrirte. Nevertheless I fancy there is no occasion at all to regret it, for all sorts of little reasons, which, taken together, form a sufficiently determinant total. I will explain them to you by word of mouth. To-morrow I will send Brockhaus the original version, which I have adjourned till now because of Easter. Shortly after your return you shall have the proofs."

There we have a revelation: the Princess Carolyne Sayn-Wittgenstein arrogating to herself supreme arbitrament of matters deeply concerning not only Franz Liszt, but, in the front rank, Richard Wagner. The nature of her objection to Liszt's "empressement" is not explained: perhaps she was vexed at the zest of novelty being taken off her handiwork by its appearing first in the German language; perhaps at not having been given the opportunity of revising a version she had never seen; perhaps—but conjectures might be advanced ad infinitum. However we interpret it, it distinctly shews far greater interest in the eulogy itself, than in its subject; it also shews the fretful application of a brake to Liszt's enthusiasm, resulting in that *gehemmte Stimmung* observed by Wagner. It is highly significant that Liszt should have to excuse himself with "all sorts of *little* reasons," without once breathing Wagner's name. Had not this article been conceived and written, at least his share of it, with the single wish to help his friend? To be of any use as an advertisement for *Lohengrin* that year—the "grain of Bellonianism"—it certainly ought to appear in the press before the Weimar season was completely over. Finally, had not Liszt *promised* his friend six weeks ago that it should be printed directly after his return to Weimar? Those were rather big reasons, of far more moment than the lady's problematic *longue vue*. So Liszt snatched a victory, for once, against superior orders. How often may he not have had to strike his colours?

If he could have foreseen the effect the appearance of that article would have, not only on Wagner's reputation in the operatic world of Germany, but still more on his private feelings, not all his reverence for Carolyne could have made Liszt hesitate an instant. The actual publication removes from Wagner's breast a load of doubt. Here at last, sealed with Liszt's own name, was the open avowal of what hitherto had been but a private confession; here was a redoubtable champion entering the lists at

last, in Germany, not only with his baton, but with his pen and name. More than that. Coupled with the long pause in the *Lohengrin* performances, and with Liszt's negligence in answering letters, the delay must previously have looked to Wagner suspiciously like a drawing back. All that being happily ended, a clean breast shall be made: "I have just read your printed essay through once more. It will be difficult to describe to you the impression your labour of love has made upon me now, of all times! I had grown cold and mistrustful toward myself, and the thought of setting about a fresh artistic labour filled me with almost nothing but ironic mirth. . . . Lately I dipped into the score of my Lohengrin; it positively disgusted me, and my occasional outbursts of laughter were of no mirth-affording sort. But *you* approach me once again; and so thoroughly have you understood, delighted, warmed, inspired me, that tears poured from my eyes, and suddenly I knew again no higher pleasure than to be an artist and create" (letter of April 18, '51). That must have reached Liszt almost simultaneously with Carolyne's protest: was it not worth all the "little reasons" which were to constitute his verbal apology to her, worth a thousand times the lady's own *longue vue?* It led directly to the birth of *Young Siegfried;* a far, far longer view.

And now for the thorough clean breast. With a candour possible only to the most childlike singleness of heart, Wagner reveals to Liszt the agonies of suspense he has unconsciously caused him during the past few months: "How extraordinary is the effect you always have on me! If I could only describe the nature of my love for you! Not one torment is there, nor one joy, that has not quivered in that love. To-day I am racked with jealousy, with fear of what is alien to me in your peculiar nature; then I feel anxiety, alarm—eh! doubt. To-morrow a fire bursts forth in me, like a forest aflame, consuming everything, to be quenched by nothing save a river of most blissful tears.—You are a marvellous being, and marvellous is our love! Had we not thus loved, we must have mortally hated each other." The jealousy was better-founded than Wagner knew; but the "alien" (*fremdartig*) lay not so much in Liszt's peculiar nature —as in the pen he sometimes let another guide.

So ends the strange history of the *Lohengrin* analysis, quâ

article. The French original, as we have seen, was to be incorporated with the account of that Herder-Goethe festival at which the opera was first produced. Early in May '51, Liszt writes Carolyne that he has sent the manuscript "to Brockhaus, with the instructions (*indications*) you have given me"—a nuance that speaks volumes. The French brochure does not appear just yet, however; its plan is soon enlarged to admit Liszt's *Tannhäuser* article from the *Débats* of 1849, "very much altered, and increased by at least a third," according to young Bülow's estimate of next October, but in reality expanded to five times its original length. Here again the hand of Carolyne is visible, adding lurid touches to the simpler speech of Liszt, and absolutely destroying all sense of symmetry; so much so, that the overture is described three times over! The last chapter (IV.) of this *Tannhäuser* analysis, in fact, is the princess's pure and simple, as we might easily have guessed. Liszt writes to her, May 8: "Thanks for your feuilleton on *Tannhäuser*. Uhlig has written a long article on the overture, in the Leipzig musical paper, which I will send you. As for myself, I should hardly know what to say to it, the Tannhäuser being a malady of which I am cured." Those who are unacquainted with the chapter in question should be warned against taking this remark as a repudiation of Wagner's opera: obviously Liszt is merely referring to what one might call Venusbergism, since that chapter is little more than a misplaced veiled apology of Carolyne's for Liszt's own 'past,' with an equally ill-timed apotheosis of the Church of Rome. May 15, Liszt writes to his princess again: "Thanks for the article on *Tannhäuser*. You certainly are right to take the opposite thesis to Uhlig, whom you very properly call a musical atheist"—so that the proof of Princess Wittgenstein's co-operation is as clear as in the former case.

Judged as a whole, this *Tannhäuser* essay is markedly inferior to the *Lohengrin* analysis, with which (and the "Herder-Goethe fêtes") it was linked to form the French brochure "*Lohengrin et Tannhäuser*, par F. Liszt," published by Brockhaus in the autumn; and again it is to be regretted that Liszt's conception should have been tampered with, especially as it was less a case of true collaboration this time, than of a tacking together of sections palpably assignable now to him, now to her, and a general touching-up with Carolynian varnish — apparently a

summer holiday-task at Eilsen. Oct. 15 Bülow writes Uhlig: "Liszt fears that you, and Wagner himself, will be little in agreement with it, as it contains features rooted in his specifically Christian and Catholic convictions"; which rather points to Liszt's secretly objecting to the tone imparted to his original work,* though he is too chivalrous to say, "The woman gave me of the tree, and I did eat."

In effect, how did Wagner regard this *Tannhäuser* essay? By the time the brochure reached him, his attention was distracted by the gigantic plan of the tetralogy then gradually evolving in his brain; whilst his health was so broken by previous excess of work, that detailed criticism would have been as fatiguing as ungrateful to him. This, however, is how he puts it to Liszt on the 20th November: "I was almost driven to write you after reading your brochure on my two operas, which reached me at the hydropathic here. But your rare friendship for me, the energy of your affection for my works, your unremitting zeal to propagate those works, and above all the splendid verve (*Schwung*), spirit, subtlety and undauntedness, with which you express your zeal—touched me far too deeply for me to be able to thank you sufficiently in the agitated state in which I was. . . . Let me now tell you that with this fresh offering of fairest love you stirred me to my inmost being, delighted and made me supremely happy. Wherever you had arrived at complete agreement with me, you profoundly moved me; since that agreement was nothing trite, but a new discovery to both of us. You roused my interest and keen attention most especially, however, where I saw my original intentions reflected with a new complexion from the mirror of your own peculiar individuality; thereby enabling me to judge the full impression I had been so lucky as to make on your superabundant artistic receptivity." It may sound a little vague; but, without wounding his friend's susceptibility, no epithet could have been better chosen than "superabundant" (*überreiche*) to designate the new complexion given to parts of Wagner's drama by a "mirror" he little suspected of being the Princess Wittgenstein's. Some three weeks later he writes to Uhlig (Dec. 13): "Wherever Liszt does not understand me as yet, he fills the gaps with a noble

* See also footnote to page 201.

Schwärmerei that makes up for it all." Certainly that was not said with direct allusion to the brochure, but it undoubtedly expresses what Wagner had just told his Weimar friend another way.

With regard to one section of the essay, on the other hand, we have a more definite opinion on record. Despite its amorphic construction, due to the stringing together of three distinct accounts, if one skips the Carolynian padding the description of the overture is the best piece of work in the *Tannhäuser* part of the brochure; and Wagner evidently recognised it as such. In March '52, having just drafted his own explanatory programme for a Zurich concert, he writes to Liszt: "After setting up this programme I examined once more what you had written about this overture, and again was seized with the highest admiration. Herwegh is of precisely the same mind as myself, about this piece of writing. The man who cannot comprehend your style, is he who does not comprehend the *music:* but the manner in which you express in sharply-chiselled words the feelings which music alone can arouse in us, must fill with transport every man who himself has felt those feelings without being able to find words for them.—Through this perusal, which has really filled me with astonishment, you have revived the wish I once expressed to you, a couple of years ago, namely that you also should write yourself a text. You have all the qualifications for it, if anyone has!" The inference is scarcely warranted by the premises—rather a generous ebullition, than the work of cool reason; but it is a pity that Liszt allowed his friend to continue in total ignorance of the collaboration, and thus to form a partially erroneous estimate of his intellectual attitude: had he but been given a confidential hint of the actual authorship, Wagner would have known how to account for the soupçon of "superficiality" that puzzles him in Liszt from time to time. This concealment of a rather important truth is one of the greatest mysteries in Liszt's intercourse with so open-hearted a friend.

Before we quite dismiss the subject, a highly enigmatic passage in one of Liszt's letters to Wagner must be noted (July 5, '51): "At the beginning of August my brochure 'Lohengrin et Tannhäuser' will appear. This work has an object which neither you nor your friends have been able to divine as yet, and still will take me a little time to attain. Nevertheless I am far from despairing of arriving at that

end—but shall not inform you of it before the moment of success, to avoid useless words; which is becoming more and more a habit with me." If Wagner and his friends of that era could not divine the book's ulterior object, it is hopeless for *us* to attempt it. One would have thought it plain enough, namely to pave the way for Wagner's operas in France, and thus to lead to his rehabilitation in Germany; but, as this is one of the letters in French, we cannot cope with Princess Carolyne's inscrutable "longue vue."

In Liszt's Will of 1860, including his religious and artistic Credo, the sentence that figures as a motto to the present chapter is completed by the following words: "La mesquinerie, pour ne pas dire la vilenie de certaines circonstances locales, toutes sortes de jalousies et d'inepties du dehors comme d'ici, ont empêché la réalisation de ce rêve dont l'honneur devait revenir à Monseigneur le Grand-duc actuel." * The petty opposition encountered by Liszt at the Weimar theatre as time wore on † was enough to break the backbone of a stronger man, to sour the temper of a less unselfish one; yet it may be questioned whether Liszt's twelvemonth of almost total absence, from October 1850 to October 1851, did not sow the seeds of that opposition, or at least give them leisure to germinate. Thus Hans von Bülow, who had arrived at Weimar in June '51 to become Liszt's pupil, writes from the Altenburg to his father Aug. 4 (after waiting some weeks for his absent host): "We were hoping for Liszt's arrival in the last days of last month; but it is indefinitely postponed again. 'Tis a bad job for all who count upon him, for through his absence from Weimar—he has scarcely passed a third of the last twelvemonth here—he is losing his influence with the Court, and the pensioned Chelard [ex-Kapellmeister] is trying to regain his lost position, with some little chance afforded him by Liszt's neglect of the Weimar institute." An unconscious commentary on Carolyne's jealousy of the theatre, also on Liszt's lament to her, "why am I obliged

* Carl Alexander, the Hereditary Grand Duke down to July 1853, when he succeeded his father.

† Culminating in a disgraceful scene at the production of Cornelius's *Barber of Bagdad*, end of 1858; whereupon Liszt severed all connection with the theatre.

to remake Weimar?" If an institution is to be reformed, it does not do for the reformer to leave it to itself while he dances attendance on the most beloved invalid in the world during the earliest stage of the reformation. That first abandonment is never likely to be forgotten, more especially if the patrons of the institute are not particularly keen on reformation. Could the Weimar Court be ever really sure thereafter, that Carolyne would not spirit Liszt away again for an indefinite period, perhaps altogether?

In that letter of Aug. 4 young Bülow also tells his father, "Liszt has already left Eilsen, but seems to intend staying awhile at Cologne and Frankfort; so I shall have to be patient for a couple of weeks." The princess accordingly was well enough to travel at last, yet Weimar—not to say, Zurich—is as far off as ever; for October 4 Hans writes again: "Liszt's arrival has been announced from week to week . . . but he is still en route, making longer or shorter halts at Cologne, Bonn, Frankfort, Nuremberg, Munich and so on, now and then returning to a place already passed, or striking off at a tangent. . . . He has a special reason for this endless delay. Sins of omission have been committed against him here, and he is paying Weimar out for it. True, all his friends have to suffer; but, as Raff says, Liszt expects from them a consideration he cannot demand from his adversaries. This procedure has its uses also; not for me, indeed, but for the local philistocracy, those musty stuck-up Hofraths who swarm like ants here, as the Geheimraths do in Berlin. It is being made clear to these gentry that the musical life of the place needs Liszt, and its wretched condition in his absence is furnishing a standard for better appreciation of his services to Weimar than certain circles, unfortunately, had found before." Liszt returns on the 12th, and his return puts a fresh complexion on affairs; for Bülow writes Uhlig, Oct. 15, "Liszt himself is strong and well,* and will begin his official duties next Sunday

* On the same day Hans writes to his mother: "The princess looked much pulled down, but has surprisingly recovered in the last day or two. She has preserved her remarkable art of disputing and her flow of words. I doubt if a woman of such amazing information, and such quick and penetrating comprehension, is anywhere to be found. Apparently the post of arguer-in-chief

with the conducting of *Freischütz*. He is quite in good odour at Court, nor does the new Intendant put any obstacles in his way; so he has no idea of leaving Weimar." From all of which it is evident that a complex game of chess was being played at Weimar, and we need not be astonished at its eventually ending in stale-mate. How far the Princess Wittgenstein was concerned in the various moves, we can only conjecture; but simpler tactics would surely have been better in the long run, for a man in Liszt's commanding position, than this terribly "long view." In any case it robbed Weimar of the *Ring* and a chance of its special theatre. In September 1850 Wagner had been urging Liszt to *train performers;* Carolyne preferred a flashy scheme for a misnamed "Goethe-foundation," and when at last she allowed Liszt to return to the "institute," October 1851, Wagner already had other ships on the stocks. Once launched, they inevitably headed away from the too frequently ice-bound port of Weimar.

If only Wagner had not been an exile! If only he and Liszt could have lived "in the same city," as Wagner so long and so fondly desired! With opportunities of constant intercourse, he might have fired his comrade to a bolder, more tenacious stand —not against the Hofraths alone. These two unsevered by a gulf of space, the world would have lain at their feet. With Wagner the dæmonic and Liszt the divine, something grander and more durable than the Weimar of Goethe and Schiller must certainly have been the outcome. But Liszt had given his soul into silken bondage, and only in the long hereafter could he save it from the veil thus gradually spun between him and his strenuous friend. Liszt, whose earliest ambition had been "d'être *quelque chose* à *quelqu'un*," needed Wagner to draw him fully out; the princess shut him up, in every sense. There is the true "tragedy of the Altenburg"; and later on, of Rome. Years afterwards, Liszt tells Carolyne of his father's deathbed warning to him when a lad of 16: "il craignait que les femmes troubleraient mon existence, et me domineraient." She had fulfilled that prophecy

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is to devolve upon me, as I am better versed in French than Raff. . . . Yesterday evening I was alone with them at supper again, and argued with the princess till late at night; it was impossible to break off, till tired-out Liszt at last relieved me from the predicament of having to choose between two points of manners, by making me play him a couple of pieces."

till it was almost too late; so that in 1873 he has to write her: "Since the three black spots, Rome, Weimar, Bayreuth, have come between, I unfortunately do not know how to write to you without reserve"; and "On two points, now of major importance to me—Weimar and Bayreuth—our opinions differ. . . . I repeat it, those who separate us are at Rome more than anywhere else." At Rome! Yes: Liszt was a good Catholic, in the very best meaning of the word; but his dominance by Carolyne in the hierarchic spirit was bound to end by separating him from herself, to a very great extent, so soon as he retraced his steps to those from whom she had separated him inch by inch.

That is a long glance into the future; but the fruit is latent in the seed, and without some knowledge of the relations of Liszt to Carolyne Sayn-Wittgenstein we can never rightly understand the external aspect of his relations to Richard Wagner. Eighteen months after Wagner's death, Liszt writes from Bayreuth to the princess (July 1884): "Wagner has a right to be glorified—we presaged it at Weimar as long ago as 1849. Succeeding years have confirmed our presentiments—to-day Wagner dominates the theatre in every place. His veritable glory is that of having never deviated from his great vocation—which he followed across so many obstacles. The immortality of a great renown on earth belongs to him." Liszt's faith in his friend's genius had grown and grown, without ever wavering; Princess Wittgenstein's admiration had been convulsive from the first, and ended in positive dislike. What internal conflicts this must have led to, we may judge when we read the signature of Liszt's last letter to her, from Bayreuth three weeks before his death (July 1886) "umilissimo Sclavissimo." In less than eight months she followed him into eternity; but the body of Carolyne Sayn-Wittgenstein rests in Rome, that of Liszt—at Bayreuth.

V.

THE "STAGE-FESTIVAL" SCHEME.

Siegfried's Death *to the fore again; "I will not compose its music in the sky."—First idea of a Festival-theatre.—Does Liszt seriously want the* Siegfried? *The poem read at Zurich.—Zigesar's offer at last; leads to birth of* Young Siegfried; *its poem still withheld from Weimar.—Diet for overtaxed nerves; water-cure at Albisbrunn; echoes from the Dresden revolt.—Conception of the four-part* Ring des Nibelungen *for a special four-days festival.*

> *I shall never write an* opera *again. As I have no desire to invent an arbitrary title for my contemplated works, I will simply call them* dramas.
>
> R. WAGNER.

To trace the evolution of the *Ring des Nibelungen*, with the gigantic scheme for its realisation, we must go back to the summer of 1850.* Even in 1849 there had been repeated talk of setting *Siegfried's Tod* to music;† but then, though Wagner was "yearning for it with all his heart," it would have only been "beating the air." May 1850—in that mysterious interval of blank despair—the poem in fact was sent to Wigand, to be published as a naked literary product: "A brief preface explained that I was hopeless of ever carrying out this work, and made my friends acquainted with it as a mere *intention*."‡ Wigand declined; and thus did Providence twice over choose a publisher unconsciously to thwart the promulgation of an unripe scheme (see p. 175 *antea*).

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* For the history of the original sketch of the "Nibelungen-myth," and the poem of *Siegfried's Tod* in particular, the reader is referred to volume ii.

† In June, September, October and December: see pages 8 and 26 *antea*, also the Correspondence with Liszt and Uhlig.

‡ Letter 35 of *Wagner-Liszt Correspondence*, i.e. July 1850.

Meanwhile Liszt had opened up another vista. Mid-July 1850 he writes Wagner: "Here is my idea of what, with God's assistance, may bring about 'a turn in your affairs.' The success of *Lohengrin* once established, I shall propose to their Highnesses [of Weimar] to authorise me to write to you, or to get Zigesar to write to you, requesting you to complete your *Siegfried* as speedily as possible, and sending you a suitable honorarium in advance, so that you might work away at its achievement without material worries for some six months." In his reply, after the most touching expressions of gratitude, Wagner treats his friend to a miniature private essay on that "monumental" thesis which claimed our passing attention in chapter III.* He then proceeds: "Having acquired this conviction, I have done with the creating of works to which I must deny all instant life, in advance, for the flattering fancy of giving them a future immortality. . . . As things now stand with me, it is not ambition that can tempt me to artistic labour, but the longing for communion with my friends, and the wish to delight them: where I know that longing and that wish appeased, I am happy and perfectly satisfied. So, if you people give my Lohengrin at little Weimar with zest and love, success and joy—were it only for the two performances you talk of—I ask no more; I shall feel my aim so thoroughly attained, that my care for that work will have come completely to an end, and all my energy can be directed to supplying you in similar fashion with something new."

Quixotic, perhaps, this renunciation of all remoter outlook; but it is a logical sequel to the train of thought that had lately found expression in *The Art-work of the Future*. So prolific in art

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* In further support of my hypothesis, that the "monumental" digression in the *Communication* (summer 1851) is a remanet from 1850, I may point to the close resemblance between such passages as "An absolute respect for the Monumental is inconceivable: it can only be based on an æsthetic revulsion against a disgusting and unsatisfying Present" (*P.* I. 277) and "The monumental character of our art must vanish . . . no longer can I yield myself to the fancy of building for an absent Future; yet, if I am to build at all for the Present, that Present must at anyrate present itself to me in a less disgusting shape than it does now"—from this letter of July 1850 to Liszt. In fact, the drift of the one document is first made perfectly clear by comparing it with the other; just as if the writer, as was not unfrequently the case with him, had supplemented in his private correspondence the sketches for a subject jotted in his notebook.—W. A. E.

is to be the new era now dawning, as Wagner believes and hopes, that the best works planned and carried out to-day will be consigned to oblivion by those to be achieved to-morrow. It was a beautiful dream, and one that certainly dispelled "all egoism, all paltry hankerings of ambition." Unpractical when we remember that art is long, life short; but how scathingly it shews up all the trickery of deliberate perverters of that title "of the Future"! That Future, like Chronos, was to devour its children when but "two nights" old.

We shall shortly meet the same idea in a still more ruthless fervour of self-immolation. For the present let us take the practical side: "I will not compose my Siegfried in the sky—for the reasons I have just adduced. You, however, offer me the artistic fellowship that could bring Siegfried to light:—I demand performers for heroes such as our stage has not yet seen. Whence are they to be got? Certainly not out of the sky, but out of the earth: *you*, I believe, are in good train to grow me them out of the earth, at least through your inspiring nurture. Hopelessly run to seed as is our whole stock of comedians, enthusiasm can make anything out of them. To the point: when you have brought out Lohengrin to your own satisfaction, I will also get my Siegfried ready for you—but only for *you* and for *Weimar!*—Two days ago I wouldn't have believed that I should come to this decision.—So I have to thank *you* for that!"

At the same time Wagner writes to Uhlig,* informing him of Liszt's proposal: "I answered him that I never would have composed Siegfried in the sky; but, if Lohengrin turned out completely satisfactorily, I might assume that performers had thereby been bred for me at Weimar, who, with proper zeal and diligence, would be able to bring Siegfried, too, as well as possible to life. Expressly for the Weimar company, therefore, would I make Siegfried also musically ready for performance.—So I have laid in music-paper and a Dresden pen: whether I still can compose, God knows! Perhaps I shall get into the way of it again, however." Later in the same letter, after the allusion to abandoned projects for "monumental" and other essays: "Should they bring Siegfried at Weimar but halfway to comprehension, I

* That undated Letter 14 which corresponds with undated Letter 35 in the *Wagner-Liszt Correspondence*.

should attach more weight to that than to anything else. What people can seize with both hands, they believe in—and though there mayn't be many of them, there will be more than I should ever convert through dumb reading. So, goodbye writer for the present!—Leave the printing of Siegfried alone; it would only cause confusion." That refrain recurs in a letter to Liszt of August 16, when *Lohengrin* was only twelve days off production: "For literary tasks I feel no great inclination: I am preaching, on the whole, to deaf ears. . . . The music for my Siegfried is already tingling in my every limb. All I now want is good-humour; and that, dear friend, I know you will make for me." The music-pen may have been tentatively set in motion (vol. ii, 279): nevertheless our last chapter but one has shewn it held in abeyance by the pen of the thinker for a twelvemonth yet.

There were two distinct and definite conditions, you see, before the musical composition of *Siegfried's Tod* was to be undertaken, even now: Liszt was to procure an order from high quarters; and *Lohengrin* was to be satisfactorily rendered. Certainly, *Lohengrin's* production came duly about on the 28th of August 1850; but Liszt himself was unable to despatch a more favourable report on September the 2nd than "Our first performance was relatively satisfactory." No wonder, then, that Wagner ignores for nearly six weeks the laconic question at that letter's close, "A quand Siegfried?" In the interval had come the hard-fought Battle of the Cuts, culminating in Wagner's bitter cry to Genast: "In what frame of mind am I to approach the composition of my next musical drama, when I remember the passages my best friends deemed omissible from *Lohengrin?*" (59-60 *antea*)—and, he might have added, from *Tannhäuser*.

One condition, therefore, was still unfulfilled, perhaps hardly realised as yet at Weimar. As to the other, Uhlig is informed Sept. 20: "Liszt had previously foreshadowed an order from Weimar for my Siegfried, against a fee sufficient to enable me to live untroubled till completion of the work: down to now they have maintained the most obstinate silence on that point.—Whether I should surrender or destine my Siegfried for a first performance at Weimar, would certainly be a question—in the present state of affairs—which I probably could answer with nothing but an unconditional No. That I virtually *gave up* my Lohengrin, when I permitted its performance at Weimar, you

surely need no telling" — for Uhlig had been an eye-witness. Thus both conditions have fallen through, so far as Wagner can judge at present.

But its author had determined not to compose his music "in the sky." Is *Siegfried's Tod* to be abandoned, then? Not unreservedly. The Weimar disappointment had led to a sudden inspiration, which, after passing through various intermediate phases, is eventually to ripen to the Bayreuth scheme. Sept. 14 (1850) Wagner had written F. Heine: "You know that Liszt has produced my Lohengrin at Weimar: in all subsidiaries the performance is said to have been quite good, but the main affair —the performers on the stage — to have fallen out flat and thoroughly unsatisfactory. Well, I suppose that's a matter of course; God is not going to work private miracles on my behalf, and certainly will not make performers—such as I want—grow on the trees in a night!—Nevertheless, I am now thinking of setting my Siegfried to music: to get it properly performed some day, I am brooding quite particular and daring plans, the realisation of which needs nothing further, than that an old uncle should make up his mind to die.* Later on, you shall hear more about it." In the letter to Uhlig just-cited, namely of September 20, written when the Battle of the Cuts was at its hottest, these "daring plans" are set forth at considerable length: "I should like to send Siegfried into the world under other colours than could be possible to the good people over there. In this regard I have just been harbouring plans and wishes that at first sight look very chimerical, yet alone can give me pleasure in the thought of finishing my Siegfried. For realising the best, the most significant and decisive thing I can achieve in existing circumstances—the conscious task of my life—it is a question of a sum, perhaps, of 10,000 thlr. If ever I could dispose of such a sum, I would proceed as follows. Here, where I just happen to be, and many a thing is not at all so bad, on some pretty meadow near the town I would have a rough theatre of beams and boards

* The "old uncle" was more than a myth: to wit, a relative of the Ritters whose death a twelvemonth later enabled Frau Julie to provide the artist with a modest stipend. Frau Julie Ritter's son Karl was with Wagner at the time the above was written, and the young man's fancy may easily have exaggerated the wealth of a moribund testator.

erected after my instructions, simply equipping it with the scenery and machinery needful for the representation of Siegfried. Then I would pick out the most suitable singers to be anywhere had, and invite them for 6 weeks to Zurich: the chorus, for the most part, I should try to form of local amateurs (here are glorious voices and a robust breed of men). In similar manner would I call my band together. From the New Year onward, invitations to attend the proposed dramatic music-festival would go out to all lovers of Musical Drama through advertisements in every newspaper in Germany. Whoever accepts, and travels to Zurich for the purpose, is guaranteed admission—naturally gratis, like all the rest! Furthermore, I bid the youth of the place, university, singing-clubs and so on, to come and hear. When all is in due order, I have three performances of Siegfried given under these circumstances in a week: after the third, the theatre shall be pulled down and my score burnt. To people whom the thing has pleased I then say, 'Go you and do likewise!' If they want to hear something new by *me* again, though, I tell them, '*You* get the money together!'—Do I seem to you downright crazy? Maybe; but I assure you, it is the hope of my life to reach this yet, the prospect which alone can lure me to take a work of art in hand. So—'find me 10,000 thalers—nothing more!'"*

"My score shall be burnt." The triumph of the Immediate (*Gegenwärtiges*) over the Monumental, with a vengeance! "Who, in the moment of enjoyment, will think of its duration? If we think of duration, enjoyment has flown" (to Uhlig, Oct. 20, '50). —"The annulling of the Monumental together with the Mode, means the entry of the immediately-present, ever new-conditioned, warmth-inspiring artwork into life; that artwork whose attributes are precisely as opposed to the fictive monumental artwork as the living man to the marble statue. Those attributes consist in this: that it is determined to a nicety by Time, by Place, by Circumstance; therefore, that it never can come to liveliest effectual show, if it come not at a definite time, a definite place, and under definite circumstances; in a word, that it must strip off every vestige of the *monumental*" (*P.* I. 278 and 276). In explanation of all which, we may draw once more on that July

* Apparently a catchword from a musical farce "100,000 Thaler" then in rehearsal for the Zurich theatre.

letter (p. 223 *antea*) which itself was written in reply to Liszt's announcement that the *Lohengrin* production would be associated with the unveiling of a Herder *monument*, the celebration of a Goethe *anniversary:* "The monumental character of our art will have to vanish; our limpet cleaving to the past, our egoistic care for durability and utmost immortality, we shall cast away; the past we shall let be—past, the future—future, and live but in to-day, the fully present, create for that. . . . To the dream of creating for the future, overlooking the present, I give myself no more. I abjure renown, and more especially the gibbering ghost of posthumous renown; for I love my fellow-men by far too much to condemn them, even in the vanity of thought, to that penury on which alone the fame of the deceased can thrive."

It was no chance crotchet, then, this contemplated holocaust, but the issue of at least a twelvemonth's wrestling with social and æsthetic problems. Nay, much farther back may we go; to the sacrifice suggested in *The Artist and Publicity*, Paris 1841: "Why do mortals fired with a spark divine forsake their sanctuary, run breathless through the city's muddy streets, and seek in hottest haste for dull and sated men on whom to force a happiness untold? Is it for fear the history of Music might one fine day stand still? Is it for that, they pluck the fairest pages from the secret history of their heart? . . . Impossible, that Duty should urge genius to the fearful act of self-denial whereby it makes itself away to public life. . . . Yet how explain the impulse that drives a human being with dæmonic force to carry just his noblest, ownest good to open market? Certainly a mixture of the most mysterious sort here comes to pass, and could we ever clearly see it, 'twould shew the spirit of the highly-gifted artist quite strictly hovering twixt heaven and hell. Undoubtedly, the godlike longing to impart an own interior bliss to human hearts is the predominant motive, and in hours of awful stress the only strength-giver. . . . Though he thus appear to be ambitious, he yet is not; for he wants no honour paid him; but its fruit he wants, in freedom. . . . In truth, he merely longs for freedom to give full play to his beneficence. . . . The world leaves him no other road to freedom, than—*money*. That is to win him recognition of his genius, and for that is the whole mad game laid out. . . . Happy the genius that Fortune ne'er

has smiled on!—It is so wondrous precious to itself: what more could Fortune give it?—And that's what he tells himself, smiles and—laughs, renews his strength; it glimmers and leaps up in him: anew it rings from him, brighter and fairer than ever. A work such as he himself had ne'er yet dreamt of, is growing up in silent solitude. That's it! That's the right thing! All the world must be entranced by this: to hear it once, and then——! Look how the madman is running!" (*P.* VII. 134-40).*

"To hear it *once*—and then?" "Perform it three times in a week"—and then destroy its score! Say what you will, there is something strangely fascinating in the thought; it takes one with a spell not easy to shake off; heroic as the enterprise that finally developed from its "three days" side. Cleopatra's pearl was a plaything, compared with what was here proposed for immolation: it was Brünnhilde bringing her own body as burnt-offering to the gods. Madness!—you say? Yet would it, after all, have been so mad? Amid the thunders of applause that mark the close of that neo-Olympian festival, imagine the impression on the younger generation! There stands the artist, in immediate presence of a realised ideal: that was enough for him; it shall not incur the perils of commercial degradation, shall not be made a mill for grinding money. Freely has he laboured long, to bring it to life; freely has he given it, to all who choose to take it as a gift; enslaved it shall not be. Repetition would but dull its edge, familiarity expose it to the prying probe of the dissector, the quantitative balance of the analyst. To life has it come; it shall not have a paper immortality. So he commits his precious notes to the defending

* A strangely similar thought is expressed in Liszt's letter to George Sand already quoted (p. 98 *ant.*): "The artist feels himself prey to a nameless evil; an unknown power forces him to reveal in words, tints or tones, the ideal that lives in him and fills him with a thirst for fruition, an agony for possession, such as no man ever felt for the object of material passion. Yet his finished work—what though the whole world applaud it!—but half contents him. Dissatisfied, he peradventure would destroy it, did not a newer vision draw his gaze away from the completed, to cast him once again into that heavenly ecstasy of pain that makes his life one constant battling for a reachless goal, a continual straining of every fibre of his mind for realisation of that which he has conceived in hours of grace, when Eternal Beauty bares itself to him without a cloud" (*Franz Liszt* I. 440-1). Note the "peradventure *would destroy it.*"

flames,* that a new Phœnix may rise from their ashes. So hopeful is he of the power yet slumbering in the breast of hundreds like him, that he voluntarily descends from his seven-days pedestal; *his* art shall not be turned into a monument, to overawe his friendly rivals, a law to which all must henceforward conform, or a "mode" to rule the next few seasons. With such a splendid instance of self-sacrifice before them, would not the assembled youth feel spurred to unfold their highest gifts in emulation, and Art itself be raised to such a dignity as had not graced it for two-thousand years?

Surely there is something symbolic, unconsciously perhaps, in its being precisely *Siegfried's Tod*, a transitional work, originally inscribed as "a grand heroic opera," that was thus to be consumed by fire. "Not Art, but merely *our* art, will go to ground; whereas the true, imperishable, ever novel art must first be born" (July letter to Liszt). And the Philistine, "the common, smug and cowardly, yet truculent man of use and wont," would not this be such a "shock" to him as Wagner deemed essential to making him a human being? "The bottomless corruption of the senses, the dastard badness of the leathern hearts of the so-called Public—it needs another Deluge to correct those little faults! But *we*, since with the best will in the world we can live in no other age than that into which we were born, let us take care that we prove our freedom and our dignity, as artists and as men; let us at least shew in *ourselves* that Man is worth something" (to Liszt, Oct. '50). So we may regard it as either the breaking of the pot of precious ointment, or Moses' breaking of the tables of testimony.

After broaching the idea to Uhlig, Wagner himself does not quite know how to take it; for he adds immediately, "Let us get back from fancies to reality. I don't believe I shall be seriously able to attack the music for Siegfried this winter. In the first place, Winter in itself is my mortal enemy; in the second I shall probably have many and not very elevating distractions. . . .

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* Some five years later we have a recrudescence of the same immolatory desire: "What I now am creating shall either enter life in circumstances entirely adapted to it, or *never*. If I die without having presented these works, I bequeath them to you; and if you die without having been able to present them worthily, you—will *burn* them. Let that be a *compact!!*" (to Liszt, from London, 1855).

So I don't reckon on getting to my big artistic work before the Spring"—i.e. of 1851. The glamour of fancy still is woven round the distant prospect: "In the Spring of 1852 accordingly (should Robin Goodfellow meantime present me with the 10,000 thlr) the performance might take place—perhaps in the midst of a storm"; yet the practical idea has come to stay, for the other member of the Dresden trio, old Wilhelm Fischer, is told on the 9th of November: "Next Spring I shall seriously set to work at the composition of Siegfried, for which—under possible favourable circumstances—I still look forward to a quite special performance" —undoubtedly at Zurich.

For some little time, as we shall learn, it was a see-saw between Zurich and Weimar; an involuntary see-saw, since neither place displayed consuming eagerness for the still-unwritten music of *Siegfried's Tod*. As for Weimar, Wagner's presentiment was correct, when he spoke of an "obstinate silence." Whatever the cause—and the simplest would be disappointment at the general impression produced by *Lohengrin* — Liszt's fugitive allusions to its proposed successor are as colourless, throughout this autumn and winter, as if that Weimar project of July 1850 had never been mooted. The plan is dropped *in silence;* a silence largely attributable to the peculiarity of Liszt's situation as outlined last chapter, but perhaps dictated also by reluctance to dash hopes he himself had raised. His "à quand Siegfried?" of Sept. 2 had simply been an articulate form of "silence," in the circumstances, and Wagner had left it unanswered in his various letters down to that of October 8: "I shall probably be unable to work at Siegfried with any heart before next Spring. But in summer it shall be finished." This we may consider a sort of feeler, to draw more definite news from Liszt. It failed entirely, for Liszt merely remarks in reply (Oct. 18): "I am very glad to learn that you are not throwing over your Siegfried, as it is certain to be '*una gran bella cosa!*' as they say in Italy—and I am rejoicing over it in advance."* There was no particular

* In the English edition of the *Correspondence* the late Dr Hueffer has translated this "I thank you for it in advance"; which gives the impression —unwarranted by the original French, "dont je me réjouis à l'avance"—that Liszt already counted on the work for Weimar. On the contrary, like the "gran bella cosa," the expression has all the appearance of the Princess Wittgenstein's way of wrapping up nothing in a sounding phrase.

encouragement in that, to a man who had most distinctly stated that he would *not* compose this music "in the sky"; we should rather have expected some apology, such as Wagner eventually puts into his comrade's mouth, for no overtures having been opened as yet at court.—Liszt's next allusion is still briefer, more impersonal: "How far have you got with Siegfried?" (Nov. 26), entirely oblivious even of Wagner's recent intimation that he could scarcely set to work before the Spring. Wagner repeats that intimation, or feeler—whichever you choose to call it—in his letter of Nov. 25 (crossing Liszt's of the 26th); yet Liszt makes no rejoinder to it, beyond another laconism on the 3rd of January 1851: "Complete your Siegfried soon! With power and genius you are amply endowed; only do not lose patience." That is Liszt's last word on the subject, till Wagner has jogged his memory more outspokenly in March!

We have here a pendant to the history of the *Lohengrin* analysis etc., related last chapter, a further reason for that cry: "Have you all forgotten me?" of Feb. 18, '51. In his answer of March 1, Liszt repudiates the bare thought that he could have forgotten or been vexed with Wagner; yet he passes over, in unmitigated silence this time, Wagner's reiterated hint that he hopes "to begin the composition of Siegfried with the advent of Spring, and keep to it incessantly." Indeed, in his private troubles Liszt must have forgotten, if not his friend, at least his promise to him. So Wagner finally abandons hints, and goes straight to the point in his letter of March 9: "Necessity compels me to procure myself certainty about my present position. Listen—and don't be angry with me. Last summer you awoke in me a hope, as to which I now must know for certain that it is about to be fulfilled, or else abandon it for good." Liszt's original Weimar proposal is then recalled to him, followed by a sketch of the writer's financial predicament: "I accordingly am obliged to think about earning money by hook or crook, and therefore should have to give up all idea of a work so purposeless, from that point of view, as the composition of my Siegfried. . . . On the other hand, were I now to settle to a big artistic task, my immediate future—for the rest of this year at least—would have to be insured me; otherwise I could never find the needful ease of mind for it. So—since want breaks iron—I ask you once more, simply to ascertain my exact position. I know that

everything turned out awry for your plan of helping me: the Grand Duchess fell ill, and was unable to attend a performance of *Lohengrin* before the third; shortly after which you went away from Weimar, and therefore have found no opportunity as yet of sounding the Grand Duchess in a fit and seemly manner. All this is clear to me, and not the remotest reproach can attach to *you*.—Merely, I must *now* know where I am. So I beg you, from the bottom of my heart, to tell me frankly how things stand, whether I still have anything to hope or not."

The request is at once direct and reasonable. The music for *Siegfried* has now become a burning question: if it is to be composed at all, it must be taken in hand immediately; but without a definite end in view? That is what Uhlig is bitterly asked on the morrow: "Would it be better for me to compose another opera *for myself?*—It's enough to make one die of laughter." After the mountainous birth-throes of *Opera and Drama* and its theoretic predecessors, to be confronted with a still-born score! And in that selfsame Spring so longed-for ever since the letter to Liszt of last autumn: "I have reached a point from which I cannot recede; I *must* think everything out to a finish, before I can become again a naïve self-reliant artist."

Eight days elapse: no answer comes; at least, no letter (see p. 211). On the ninth, Wagner forms a swift resolve: the poem of his *Siegfried's Tod*, withdrawn from the printer on the first intimation of a possible order from Weimar last summer, he now determines to make public in another way. March 17 a little note is sent to Sulzer, with a petition for the eleemosynary replenishment of a cigar-box, but also with "another request. I should like to read my *Siegfried* aloud on Wednesday evening [the 19th] about 6 o'clock. In your capacity of member of the Board of Education, could you manage to improvise for me the use of lecture-room No. 1 in the High School, for this heathenish recital? If not, Baumgartner will procure me the smaller hall in the Casino." The reading duly came off, presumably in the Casino and before an invited audience; with what outward effect, we are not informed, beyond the admiration of friend Sulzer.* Of greater interest than the momentary effect, is the

* In the *Neujahrsblatt d. Allg. Mus.-Gesellschaft in Zurich*, 1901, Herr Steiner remarks that this poem "had roused Sulzer from the first to the liveliest admiration in general, and a few critical objections in particular. To the

unspecified cause of that recital. From the shortness of the notice given, coupled with the fact that he was already booked for an orchestral benefit on the intervening day (the 18th), we may reasonably conclude that Wagner had been seized with impatience at that "obstinate silence" of Liszt's, and determined to plough his Siegfried furrow for himself at Zurich. At anyrate the recital was followed up by a reappearance as conductor at the local theatre (March 26 and 31, p. 78 *antea*), and, a month or so later, by the publication of that pamphlet on *A Theatre at Zurich*. With the Weimar uncertainty, and Spring already at his heels, it was high time to think seriously of another string to his bow.

It never rains but it pours, says the old proverb: now that Wagner has begun to take the fate of *Siegfried's Tod* into his own hands, he is cheered by a miniature downpour of happy events. March 10 he had written Uhlig, "I fancy I shall soon be done for—soon and entirely." April 19 he writes, "I feel more cheerful again. Outer circumstances had to contribute to it: in the first place Frau Ritter supplied me with money once more; I have found a publisher for *Opera and Drama;* Liszt's article on Lohengrin in the Illustrirte Zeitung has refreshed and warmed me anew to artistic activity; and now come Breitkopf und Härtel with their consent to print the pianoforte-score of Lohengrin." The last two factors, as shewn last chapter, bore a direct relation of cause and effect; the whole four were of good omen for the renewal of creative energy. And Liszt himself, returned to Weimar but a few days since, at last had answered on the 9th of April that inquiry of a month before. True, it was not a very hopeful answer, but it was a proof of the vitality of Liszt's affection, and it draws from Wagner the confession already-cited (p. 214), to which another typical

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latter, in fact, Wagner rendered justice in various places, especially in the configuration of the close. Moreover, the last decisive incitement to the drama of Young Siegfried is said to have proceeded from Sulzer." Possibly the interim revision of the *Tod*, which I assume in cap. ix, may have been due in part to Sulzer's criticisms; but the genesis of *Young Siegfried* is so clearly stated in Wagner's May letter to Uhlig (237-8 *inf.*) that I must demur to the other half of Herr Steiner's theory. If ever a work bore within itself the evidence of *organic* growth, that work is Wagner's *Ring des Nibelungen*.

excerpt must now be added: "It is altogether inexpressible, what you have wrought on me. All round me I see nothing but the most luxuriant Spring, life bursting from seed and shoot; and with it all, so glad a pain, so poignantly intoxicating a gladness, such joy at being a human creature with a beating heart, were it to beat to nothing but sorrow—that my only grief is to be obliged to *write* it you" (Apr. 18).

Liszt's answer with respect to the Siegfried project had been as follows:—"Your last letter [March 9] made me very sad. I do not, however, entirely give up the hope of conducting the somewhat difficult diplomatic negotiation regarding your *Siegfried* to a favourable conclusion. Perhaps I may succeed in terminating the affair by the middle of May. Write me what sum you require, in round numbers, and (quite between ourselves, since I must expressly beg you to tell *nobody* about it) let it be a fairly circumstantial letter that I can shew to Zigesar. You must very much excuse me for worrying you with that sort of thing, as it grieves my heart—deeply grieves it—that the matter cannot be brought more simply to a prosperous issue; but in my opinion it will be necessary for you to explain to me by letter alike your position, the plan of the work, and the artistic hopes that may justly be built on it. I need not tell you that I do not ask this for *myself*. . . . You know me, and know that you may place implicit confidence in me." Those exasperating dots before the last sentence deprive us of a possible clue to Liszt's late reticence, for there can be no doubt that they conceal some reference to the Court of Weimar, as may be judged from Wagner's reply. Contained in the same letter of April 18 on which we have drawn so largely, that reply is exactly what we should have anticipated from an artist so convinced of the dignity of his art, an artist who had said not long ago, "when I must proffer myself, I have already lost all power" (to Liszt, July '50). His work must be asked for, and taken on trust, not submitted to a court of inquiry: "Let us leave the Grand Duchess in peace; *I* neither can nor will beg anything of her, however indirect the path. Were an offer to come to me entirely from her own accord, it would touch and gratify me the more—as coming from a *royal* lady; but I cannot consent to turn even so remote a possibility into an impossibility by *soliciting* a proof of her kindness. Away with all business negotiations, from this question: that

royal lady's sympathy has made too beautiful an impression on me, for me to take the pains to spoil it. . . . With the beginning of May I shall have at my Siegfried, let things go as they may. Away with all guarantee of my support! I shall not starve."

It is curious to notice how Wagner's rugged instinct invariably triumphs over the accommodations suggested by his diplomatic friend: their natures being different, so must be their ways; yet one often feels that a little less diplomacy would have been better for Liszt himself in the long run. In this instance, Wagner's unbending attitude was more than opportune: without the humiliation of drawing up a schedule of his monetary and artistic position (he had had enough of that with Lüttichau), he obtained what he wanted, and—was able to return it a few months later with neither any loss of dignity nor the sense of playing fast and loose. If his *Lohengrin* were not sufficient earnest of his powers, what possible good could result from a formal begging-letter? If *Lohengrin* had evoked the smallest enthusiasm at the Weimar Court, a simple hint from Liszt ought to suffice to procure an order for the music of a drama with whose subject Liszt was well acquainted.

Liszt's hint and *Lohengrin* sufficed in fact. The fourth performance of that opera took place, we know, on April 12, just three days after Liszt's semi-despondent suggestion. On the 15th he writes P^ss^ Wittgenstein, "I am about to commence my *Siegfried* negotiation—perhaps I may succeed!" On the 30th, again to Carolyne: "My time has been terribly occupied by local affairs—among them the *Siegfried* negotiation—Wagner with Zigesar." May 3 (to the same): "I have good news to tell you; the *Siegfried* affair is in order. Zigesar is writing Wagner this evening—but, the thing having to be kept a secret, *say nothing about it to anyone.* 300 thalers will be given to Wagner—100 the first of July, 100 the 1st of November, 100 the 1st of March 1852, and if the score is delivered by the 1st of July next, 200; total 500 thalers [£75]. But the secret is so strict, that I myself am supposed to know nothing about it." That letter—confirmed by another to Carolyne next day, "Wagner's *Siegfried* affair is terminated now, in the sense I wrote you"—supplies one missing link in the *Wagner-Liszt Correspondence*, where a further gap, representing Wagner's thanks to Liszt for his

successful mediation, must be supposed to have been filled by the unpublished portion of his "Goethe-Stiftung" letter (May 8).

A transformation-scene. So long as there had been no immediate practical outlook for the new "grand heroic opera," it had remained a thing apart, purely and simply *Siegfried's Tod*. In the background of Wagner's brain it was still connected with a far more comprehensive vision, as evidenced by the original prose-sketch of the "Nibelungen Myth" in 1848; but there had been no conscious purpose to fill out the plan beyond the one-night work. No sooner is the definite offer made, however, than it acts as a precipitant to a portion of those floating fancies, and the *Ring* itself begins to crystallise. That formal offer of Zigesar's must have been received by Wagner on the 7th or 8th of May; within twenty-four hours the first extension of his plan is mapped, for Liszt writes to Carolyne on the 13th: "Zigesar has just communicated to me the answer of Wagner, who accepts the *Siegfried* proposition with thanks most admirably expressed. Only, he will compose a *Young Siegfried* first—which we shall give in February 53 at latest, to prepare the public for the *death* of Siegfried, the poem of which you know, and which, I believe, will be Wagner's masterpiece. Indeed one must drop one's cap very low before a man of such genius. I will send you his four sheets on the Goethestiftung as soon as I have read them—and will get a copy made for you of his letter to Zigesar. *Verum dignum et factum est.*"

Unfortunately that letter to Zigesar (May 8 or 9) has not been published; but we possess a very good substitute for it in one to Uhlig of May 10, where the process of evolution is described at length:—"From Weimar I have offers for a new opera: I am to deliver it by the first of July 1852, and be paid 500 thalers in all between this and then.—Well, I have arrived at fresh conclusions as to what to do. As soon as I was faced with the serious question of a Weimar performance of 'Siegfried's Tod' next year, the thing was bound to seem to me entirely impossible. Whence to get performers or public for it? However, I had been plagued throughout the winter with an idea that has so completely subjugated me at last, as a recent flash of inspiration, that I am

going to realise it now.* Did I not write you once about a merry subject? It was the lad who sets out to 'learn to fear,' but is so dense as never to be able to. Conceive my alarm, on suddenly discovering that this lad is none other than—young Siegfried, who wins the Hoard and wakes Brünnhilde!—My mind's made up. Next month I write the poem of the 'young Siegfried,' for which I'm now collecting my wits. July will start the composition—and such unblushing confidence have I in the warmth of the subject and my own staying power, that I propose to reach the composition of 'Siegfried's Death' next year with unabated vigour [L'homme propose, etc.].—'The young Siegfried' has this immense advantage, that it plays the weighty myth upon the audience like a fairy-tale told to a child. Everything is stamped on the senses in plastic sharpness; everything is understood—and when it comes to the serious 'Death of Siegfried' the audience knows all that had to be assumed or barely indicated there,—and—my game is won. The more so, as my less heroic than boyishly sprightly 'Young Siegfried,' far nearer to the popular comprehension, will have prepared and practised the performers for the much more arduous task of 'Siegfried's Death.' —Each piece, however, will be quite complete in itself; only on the first occasion need they be presented to the public in succession; after that, they can be given independently of one another, according to means and discretion."

In conception, then, the *Ring* has already rounded a full quarter of its circle: from West it has worked back to the sunny South. Farther it could scarcely go while destined for production at "a given time and place," that time being February 1853 and that place the tiny Weimar. Even as it stands, the execution of the scheme appears to us quite inconceivable without its author's recall from exile to take supreme command.

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* "Da hat mich nun aber den ganzen Winter schon eine Idee geplagt, die mich kürzlich endlich als Eingebung so vollständig unterjocht hat, dass ich sie jetzt realisiren werde." The word *Eingebung*, colloquially translatable as "happy thought," is never used by Wagner in the sense of a suggestion emanating from someone else; so that Sulzer's innocent claim to have prompted the dramatisation of *Young Siegfried* (see p. 234 *n*) must fall to the ground. It is highly probable, however, that the "flash" came to Wagner in the act of reading out his *Siegfried's Tod* at the Zurich Casino, when the author's whole soul would be thrown into his characters.

Liszt seems to have had no such doubt. In his elation at the victory thus far gained for his friend, his admiration of the lavishness of genius that can offer twofold the value of its bond, he gives his pen free rein for once (there being no one by to bridle it): "So we're to have a *young* Siegfried. Truly you're a quite incredible fellow, to whom one must doff one's cap three times! The happy ending of this matter delights my heart, as you may well imagine, and I firmly *believe* in your work. But let us keep it an *absolute secret* until the sending-in of Young Siegfried (July 1, 1852), and not set people chattering in advance. Here *nobody* besides Zigesar knows anything about it, and we shall take care that it doesn't leak out to the public" (May 17). We may guess that it was to the younger generation of the House of Weimar that the friendly little plot was due, for this is the letter that reports the fifth performance of *Lohengrin* as given "at the express desire of the Hereditary Grand Duchess," and Wagner's answer is characteristic of the poet to whom the leading motive of *Young Siegfried* resides in the "awakening of Woman."* If only he might discard the "curial style" demanded by court-etiquette, he would dearly like to convey his thanks by letter to his patroness herself: "Contact with a noble sympathetic female nature affords us an infinitely beneficial joy; such a joy I fain would gain as blessing for my coming work." As to that work: "To-day is my birthday [May 22], for which you could not have sent me a better present than your letter received by me yesterday. Heaven has not bestowed fair weather on me yet; but I'm merely waiting for the first fine sunny day, to begin the poem of my 'Young Siegfried' with the pen as well, since it's already finished in my head. I expect to be able to send it you in July."

"Fine weather" evidently arrived within a day or two, for Adolf Stahr is informed on the last of May: "These past six days I have set my pen to work at a 'Young Siegfried': this very day I have completed the draft (in dialogue) of the closing scene —Brünnhilde's awakening."† Three days afterwards (June 3) the versification is commenced, to be completed in three weeks

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* See letter to August Roeckel, Aug. 24, 1851.

† A translation of the whole letter (only recently published) will be found in the Appendix. 491

to the day. Midsummer Day, appropriately enough, sees the Sun-god at his zenith: "This morning my 'Young Siegfried' came full-fledged into the world." *

Conceived in that Spring for which its author had yearned so long, completely drafted in his own month of May, this poem is the very epitome of Wagner's nature; it allies Young Siegfried to THE WANDERER. The "merry subject" is developing into something far more "earnest" even than *Siegfried's Tod* (in its original form), thus affording a striking parallel to the instantaneous replacement of that other merry subject, *Die Meistersinger*, six years back, by the profoundly tragic *Lohengrin*. And *Der junge Siegfried* marks a distinct stage in its creator's progress: it is the new leaven that is so to react on that "Nibelungen Myth" of 1848 as to turn it to a Cosmic tragedy. From the single page that represents it in the said prose-sketch of 1848 it would be impossible to reconstruct this section of the drama; for that page has not a word to say of the Wanderer, Alberich or Erda. To the Zurich period, therefore, it belongs more definitely than any of the three other members of the tetralogy, to which it ultimately gives its whole direction. We have to speak of it in absence of the original text,† since the *Siegfried* we all know so well is the result of two distinct revisions. The changes thus introduced, however, may in the second case be demonstrated, in the first quite easily inferred. Their discussion must be reserved for a more convenient season (cap. ix.); suffice it for the moment, that Wotan in his character of the Wanderer already plays a principal part (if the Wanderer as yet is identifiable with Wotan?), but apparently a part more resembling that of Gurnemanz in *Parsifal* than of Hans Sachs in *Die Meistersinger:* he does not seem to have risen as yet to the height of his renunciation. That inevitable result will follow soon.

The poem of *Young Siegfried* had been expressly written for Liszt and Weimar, so far as any great artwork can be said to

* Letter to Uhlig, June 24, 1851.

† Somewhere that original text must be still in existence, for we hear of at least two *copies* of the manuscript: one sent to Liszt (a little later), and one carried home to Dresden for Frau Ritter by Uhlig, who may be assumed to have made for himself a third. Let us hope that the master's heirs may some day publish, or authorise the publication of, so valuable a document.

have been created to order; but in the very terms of announcement to Liszt we see how entirely it was a matter of inner necessity: "I've quite finished the poem of my 'Young Siegfried.' It has given me **great** delight; in any case it is what I must have done now, and the *best* thing I have been able to do, so far. I'm *truly glad* of it." Owing to the accident of Uhlig's needing directions for the route to be taken on his journey to Zurich, it was *he* who received the earliest intimation; but even the trifling pause, that intervened before this letter to Liszt, is an augury of future changes in the poem's destination. Wagner cannot bring himself to part with it, even in duplicate, just yet: "My headlong mode of working always tells upon me somewhat severely in the end, and I am obliged to recuperate awhile, as usual; for the next few days, accordingly, I cannot undertake the making of a copy for you (for many reasons I should have to do it myself!). Moreover, I am a little shy of laying my poem before you thus baldly; a shyness that has its cause in *me*, not *you*." It would be more correct, perhaps, to say "in *it*." We remember how Schumann had been at a loss to imagine how such a text as *Lohengrin's* could possibly be set to music: honestly, would not Liszt have felt the same incredulity if he had not first seen the score? Nay, *did* he not express his doubts of the feasibility of performance after his first study of that score? And the text of *Young Siegfried* had gone far beyond *Lohengrin*, far beyond even the *Death of Siegfried*. What would be the first impression of the musician when confronted with a libretto in which there was no female part at all until the final act, and in which the prima donna had not a syllable to say or sing before that act itself was half over? Even Liszt, with all his growing faith in Wagner's genius, would surely have felt uneasy. And Liszt was not alone at Eilsen: this poem would most certainly be shewn in all its unadorned simplicity to the florid Princess Wittgenstein, who already had extinguished *Wieland*. The thought is not uttered, but seems to hover in the background of the immediately-following request, that Liszt—not Liszt and his companion—shall come and hear the poem read:—

"Can't I get a sight of you shortly? A little while back you held me out that prospect. How stands it now? Can you come and visit me, or at least appoint a rendezvous within my tether? I beg you, answer this question immediately. My longing to see

you dear, you glorious friend again, and spend a few days with you, after two whole years—in which you have been so indescribably much to me—is greater than I can tell you. Can't you fulfil that longing?—See! if we met like that awhile, I could save my Young Siegfried to *read aloud* to you. It would be a great weight off my mind: the written word—I fear—is so insufficient for my purpose here; but if I could only render it to you with living voice—and approximately as I mean it—my mind would be thoroughly set at ease as to the poem's impression upon you. So, write me at once what my prospects are. If you cannot come (heigho!) I'll have a copy made at once, and send it you."

Liszt could not come; hardly a free agent, as we have seen, he was dragged around to every place but Switzerland—another factor in the sum of causes that were diverting this Siegfried scheme from the ordinary theatre. He scarcely realises the drift of the author's fears, for he writes to Bülow from Eilsen on the 4th of July: "I have a letter from Wagner to-day, acquainting me with the happy accouchement of the poem of his 'junge Siegfried,' completely finished now. Within a year, as I suppose, we shall be receiving the score at Weimar, and I am looking forward to the *thirty* rehearsals it will mean for me; since we luckily have not got so far as London yet, where a five-act work is given after ten days' study." Next day he writes to Wagner himself (in French), warmly congratulating him, expressing his grief at his enforced inability to come and hear the poem read, but somewhat impolitically bringing it into the same train of thought with the rejected *Wieland:* "You must need rest and a little country excursion, after the achievement of your work. I beseech you not to plague yourself at once for my sake with the labour of a copy of Siegfried. You can send it me at your convenience, later on, to Weimar; where Wieland still remains locked up, to my regret, as I have not the needful keys about me." Indeed, as not unnatural with an artist of Liszt's antecedents, it was the *music* he looked forward to. So great is his confidence in *that*, that he goes on to second his friend's idea of getting Härtels to exchange their offer to publish the full score of *Lohengrin* for a promise to "bring out the pianoforte edition and full score of Siegfried soon after the Weimar production, which will presumably take place (at latest) in February 1853, for the birthday of her Royal Highness the Grand Duchess."—

Incidentally, it will be remarked that the "profound secret" is rapidly becoming public property, so many people have been let into it by both parties.

Liszt's copy of the *Young Siegfried* poem does not reach him for some months to come. Uhlig takes one back to Dresden, for Frau Ritter. Wagner had offered (July 11) to send another to Liszt by the same messenger; but Liszt's arrangements for quitting Eilsen, as set forth in his answer of July 16, precluded any possibility of Uhlig's finding him still there on his journey home from Zurich; whilst that answer—in French, and with a message of "admiration" from Pss Wittgenstein—omitted any reference to the offer of the poem. Thus we find Wagner writing Uhlig on the 24th of August: "I have had the copy of my new 'comic opera-text' made for Liszt; but I'm not sure if I shall send it him just yet.—I'm now proceeding to the music, with which I expect to enjoy myself thoroughly. What you cannot possibly imagine, is a-making quite of itself! I tell you, the musical phrases build themselves on these verses and periods without my having to trouble at all; everything springs as if wild from the ground. The beginning I have already in my head; also a few plastic motives such as that for Fafner."

In the last quotation we may trace one reason for hesitance about sending Liszt the copy he was in no hurry to receive:* if Uhlig, Wagner's most faithful disciple and exponent, could not imagine how this new "libretto" was to wed itself to music, even after a month of personal intercourse in which it must have formed a principal topic, might not Liszt be absolutely scared by the product of his friendly bargain? That was the conscious reason, thus expressed by Wagner in the historical letter of November 20 (when the hitherto unconscious cause had also become clear to his mind): "Last Spring you so inspired me by your article on Lohengrin that I joyfully resumed the execution of a drama—for your sake—as I wrote you at the time. 'Siegfried's Tod,' however, was impossible for the time being; I recognised that I must first prepare the way for it by another

* There may have been reasons with which we are not made acquainted; for, as will be observed in the Appendix (p. 496 *infra*), a letter of Liszt's of about this date is missing, a letter answered by Wagner on Aug. 23. The "requisite standpoint," in the quotation forming the bulk of this paragraph suggests some such mental or sentimental obstacle on Liszt's side.

drama; so I took up a long-cherished plan, to make the '*young Siegfried*' the subject of a poem: in it whatever is partly narrated in 'Siegfried's Tod,' partly assumed as half-known, was to be actually represented in fresh and buoyant traits. That poem was swiftly sketched and finished.—No sooner did I propose to send it to you, than I experienced a strange oppression; I felt as if I couldn't possibly do so without a lengthy explanation, partly as to the mode of its working out [in music], partly as to the requisite standpoint for regarding the poem itself. My first deduction was, that I had much still left to tell my friends ere I came before them with this poem: I therefore wrote the circumstantial Preface to my earlier three opera-poems [*Communication*]. Then I meant to undertake the musical composition: to my joy I found music shaping itself to these verses most naturally and easily, altogether of itself as it were. Only, the first beginning of this labour warned me that I should completely undermine my health if, without having thoroughly attended to it, I yielded to my impulse, and pursued—presumably without a break—what I had just begun. So I came to this hydropathic establishment, and now felt the urgent necessity of sending you the poem at last:—remarkable to say! something always held me back; again and again I put it off, because it seemed to me as if your first acquaintance with this poem would set you in a certain perplexity, as if you would not quite know what to make of it, whether it were a subject for hope or distrust."—There we must leave the apology for the present, not to anticipate events.

As to the music for *Young Siegfried*, it can scarcely have got beyond a fragmentary sketch or two; for Wagner writes to Uhlig on the 8th September, i.e. a fortnight after his first mention of it: "Had I gone to my 'young Siegfried' in my present state, perhaps I should have become incurable by next Spring. . . . Moreover, if I had dragged along with my infirm lower-man, I should have been highly inconsistent with my principles. The idea of setting to work at my Siegfried in perfect health has something of what I might call a glad solemnity. So—it's settled—I shall undergo the complete water-cure." If it were not a sufficiently serious matter in itself, to be constantly suffering, it would be difficult to suppress a smile at the seriousness with which the artist proposes to get restored to health on principle, in order to attack a work which he intends to be "far healthier than

Lohengrin;" but he never could do anything "by halves." So water is to purge his brain for the two Siegfrieds—and rather more than he imagines.

This "water" interlude we may take as a not unwelcome relief in the midst of a more intricate topic. What Wagner had to undergo, however, in the vain attempt to diet his body into a condition of robust health, would be past belief in these days of saner physiology, had we not his written word for it. Poor Uhlig himself, its original instigator, succumbed to the effects of a less drastic form soon afterwards.

It was nearly a twelvemonth since, that Uhlig began pressing his "water views" upon his leader; Wagner then replied, "I only drink water when I feel a thirst for it; yet I am far less sanguine than you!" (Oct. 9, '50). But the idea soon exercised a kind of fascination over him: in a fortnight he is so far on the road to conversion, that he admits its value on the testimony of his younger friend's experience. By Christmas he had commenced to experiment on himself, in an amateur fashion: "I, also, am doing a sort of water-cure; besides a sponge-down in the morning, cold water drunk in bed." That does not satisfy the zealot Uhlig; he recommends a "Neptune-girdle," which sounds something like a wet waistband, and makes one shiver at the thought of wintry cold in Switzerland. Wagner valiantly attempts it: "I followed your advice about the Neptune-girdle at once. I hope it will suit me. On the whole I feel surprisingly better than last year" (Jan. 20, '51). Two weeks later, however, he has paid the penalty of dabbling: "I'm rather unwell. By the advice of a firstrate physician, who also is an advocate of water, I have had to lay aside the neptune-girdle for a time." And laid aside it appears to have remained, till Uhlig came to Zurich and waxed eloquent about the virtues of a system that decidedly had added neither colour to his cheeks nor flesh to his bones.

Uhlig unluckily did more: he brought with him a water-volume by a certain Rausse, and well-meaningly left it behind him. On the 24th of August ('51), taking a rest after the labour of fair-copying the *Communication*, Wagner relates how he has begun to turn Rausse's theories into practice during the past week: no wine, no beer, no coffee, no soup; only cold water and milk, so far as drinkables are concerned; 3 to 4 glasses of cold water in bed

before rising, and any number of glasses during the day; baths at home, or in the lake at midday; half an hour's walk immediately (!) after food. No wonder he remarks that his head feels "lighter, but often somewhat dull," though he considers the latter a mere passing effect, and expects "to end by getting more health than I shall know what to do with." Naturally the end of another fortnight reveals him in a wretched state, so wretched that he has been to consult the proprietor of a hydropathic quackery (Sept. 8), who equally naturally insists on his coming there, to submit to heroic measures. Sept. 16 Wagner goes to Albisbrunn in the commune of Hausen, on the hills to the south-west of Zurich, too ill to think of any Siegfrieds for the moment—to say nothing of his departure coinciding with renewed whimperings from the incompetent Dresden publisher of *Tannhäuser* and its two predecessors.

On the whole, these ten weeks at Albisbrunn appear to have done him temporary good, but rather as a change of air and scene, a relaxation of mental strain, than in any other way. His humour does not forsake him, and it is here that his gigantic plan matures; but when one reads of the treatment to which he is subjected, one can feel nothing save amazement at the power of resistance innate in his constitution. This is how he describes the "cure," a fortnight ere its termination: "My daily programme now: 1) From ½ past 5 to 7 in the morning, cold pack; then cold tub (*Wanne*) and promenade; breakfast at 8, dry bread and milk or water [no butter allowed, as he says in another letter]. 2) Short promenade again; then a cold compress. 3) Towards 12 o'clock a wet rub-down; short promenade; another compress. Then dinner in my room, to avoid disrelish [was it, or the sight of other victims, so nasty?]. An hour of idling: brisk walk for two hours —alone. 4) About 5 o'clock another wet rub-down and a little promenade. 5) Hip-bath for a quarter of an hour, about 6, followed by a promenade to warm me [surely in a corridor, for it must have been pitch-dark by then]. Another compress. At 7, supper: dry bread and water. 6) Whist-party till 9, followed by another compress; and about 10 o'clock to bed. This regimen I now can manage very well: perhaps I shall even increase it." About the middle of the course, Minna came to visit her husband for four days (leaving Oct. 30), and delivered herself of almost her only recorded "witticism," as he styles it:

"She called our doctor a water-Jew. Excellent! But he is doing me no harm. We know of ourselves what is good for us. Further, he is rough and unsympathetic—a mere money-speculator—rather than a quack. . . . I feel myself on the high road to recovery." The respite from domestic worries may have had something to do with it.

He was not quite lonely at Albisbrunn, as we may guess from the "whist-parties." Karl Ritter had accompanied him, to share the supposed benefits of the cure; perhaps also to lighten its expenses—for unhappily the Schwerin fee of 20 louis d'or for *Tannhäuser*, which Wagner had ear-marked for the purpose, did not arrive just yet. A more distant Dresden acquaintance, a certain Captain Hermann Müller, had also come with him.* Presumably one of those officers who took part in the discussions on Folk-arming in Wagner's garden May 1848, at the end of that year Capt. Müller had been elected to the Second Chamber of the Saxon Landtag, the dissolution whereof precipitated the Dresden insurrection (see vol. ii); two months after that rising, he was dismissed from the King's service in the 2nd brigade of Infantry-of-the-line; elected once more to the Second Chamber, in December '49 he moved the abolition of the state of siege in Dresden and its vicinity, a resolution carried by an overwhelming majority, but to no effect; in February 1850, menaced with arrest, he fled with his sister to Switzerland, whereupon his papers were seized. Exactly when he arrived in Zurich, we cannot say, except that Uhlig (to whom he sends greetings) would seem to have met him on his own visit in the summer; nor have we more than an incidental mention of him after Albisbrunn.† His presence at the latter place, however, has a modicum of interest for us, as it obviously led to a brief revival of Wagner's revolutionary ardour—in theory and in private. Hermann Müller had been one of Frau Schröder-Devrient's most intimate friends, and the news of her arrest in this October (vol. ii, 347) would certainly be

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* See Letter 16 to F. Heine, Sept. '51.

† Feb. 26, '52, to Uhlig: "H. Müller has come back from Paris; he now is trying for an appointment on the Federal staff"; March 11, '52: "Lindemann's water-cures, several of which were witnessed by Müller when in Paris, are said to be remarkable." A. Steiner informs us that Müller obtained his Zurich military appointment, entering the service of the Canton as Officer of Instruction, and advancing to the rank of Commander of a battalion.

conveyed by him to Wagner, almost simultaneously with the reports of Roeckel's attempt at escape from Waldheim and the consequent exacerbation of his prison discipline,* to which Wagner alludes in a letter to Uhlig of mid-October: "That about Roeckel, and so on, in Waldheim is truly terrible!" Here were elements, indeed, to revive awhile the wellnigh-effaced political train of thought.

In curious contrast with the Roeckel and Devrient tidings, fresh rumours reach Wagner of a possibility of his own restoration to freedom of movement. Oct. 22 he writes to Uhlig: "Do you really think that, as a result of the approaching Historical Concert, I may be recalled to Dresden? Oh, that would indeed be fine!" The exclamation we can only regard as ironical, judging from the mode in which a far more positive report is received some two weeks later: "Last Friday, just as I had got out of my afternoon hip-bath, the postmaster of Hausen came rushing into my room, and shewed me the Zurich *Freitagszeitung*, where stood in print:—'Richard Wagner, living in Zurich at present, has been fully pardoned by the King of Saxony. (He had been condemned to a long term of imprisonment on account of participation in the May-revolt).' To the astonishment of my good postmaster I remained mortally indifferent. Nor has any confirmation of the report since reached me: so I may presume that it is incorrect. Were there really anything in it, the only sequel I could give to the occurrence, would be to seek immediate denaturalisation in Saxony, to become a citizen here: with a Swiss pass, I then could travel whither I would, but certainly should *not* come to Germany. However, the whole thing is nothing but gossip, and I shan't make myself ridiculous by crowing. Just one word more: *my* pardon would be a striking instance of caprice" (Nov. 11, '51). After the trouble into which the Devrient had just been brought by a "cry" of 1849, and seeing that a general amnesty of minor offenders was sternly refused, it certainly would. But there was not the smallest intention on the part of Beust and his colleagues to test Wagner's adherence to Switzerland.†

It is notable that this temporary revival of the associations of

* See Appendix. 496

† The entirely groundless rumour had a fairly long life, notwithstanding. Liszt writes to Wagner on the 1st of December: "Perhaps you will soon come back to Germany, as various newspapers announce already."

1848-9 should have synchronised with a return to the broader subject of that "Nibelungen Myth" conceived during a lull in the bygone revolutionary movement. But there was another factor at work on the poet's brain, the awe-inspiring solitude of those roamings on the hill-tops, with no other companion than Nature: "Selige Oede auf sonniger Höh'!" (*Siegfried* act iii). "Ah, would you were here!"—he writes Uhlig, Sept. 30—"Whenever the atmosphere is clear, one might die of the bliss of this scenery." Again, Oct. 22: "We are surrounded by thick mist. I have this instant come down from the Albis peak, where I had the finest view since I stood on a certain Kreuzthurm: the whole chain of Alps in brightest sunshine, from Säntis to the Bernese Oberland; and above the depths spread out a sea of heavy cloud, from which the awful heights stood gloriously forth, a world of islands." There we have the mother-thought of *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre:* Walhall proudly glistening above the mists that fill the valley; the Valkyrie's approachless "island" peak; and Wotan ruler of the clouds that span the gulf and melt into the waters.

The first hint of a tetralogy is given in a letter from Albisbrunn to Uhlig (No. 35), unfortunately not dated, but assignable by internal evidence to mid-October 1851. It is a spasmodic ejaculation in broken sentences, at the end of a long epistle, but strangely foreshadows all that Bayreuth itself was to mean long hence to the writer: "Wishes:—a little house, with field and garden!*—To work with zest and joy,—but not for now. With Siegfried some other big nuts in my head: three dramas, with a three-act prologue. — When all the German theatres break down, I fling up a new one on the Rhine, call people together, and produce the whole in course of a week. —Quiet! Quiet! Quiet!—Country! Country!—then—health—cheerfulness—hope!—else—all is lost! I *can* no more." Homely enough in its commencement, it is the cry of one wrestling with an inner afflatus.

* The next brief mention of the future *Ring* (Nov. 3) is also preceded by the aspiration for a settled home: "Beyond the water-business, my employment consists in building a house on paper with rule and compasses. Later on I shall carry it out in pasteboard." A tiny castle in the air, with its foundations laid, perchance, by young Karl Ritter's over-estimate of what could be done with his family's quite recent inheritance.

Sudden as the flash is, it throws light on a previous passage in this same letter, where, without a word of warning, we read of a prospective abrogation of the Weimar bargain so recently struck. Liszt is to have a proof sent him of the whole *Communication* (in its as yet unaltered form) at the earliest possible moment: "*Then* I will send him the 'young Siegfried' poem—though I shall have to inform him at the same time that I will get the composition ready, but cannot let the whole be performed at Weimar *without being there myself;* which certainly will give the entire affair a fresh complexion, that naturally must determine me to cancel the whole Weimar stipulation. This I foresaw, and resolved from the first not to eat into the Weimar subsidies, so as to be able to extricate myself from the whole affair in case of need." Unfortunately he had been compelled to use the first instalment, as he goes on to say, and does not see how he is to set aside even the second, due in November: thus is the entire position complicated by an empty purse—though only for about another month, when the Ritters come to the rescue.

Apart from the vulgar question of thalers, did this contemplated abandonment involve any ingratitude toward Liszt and Weimar? The question may as well be answered at once, though it does not present itself in tangible terms till a slightly, very slightly, later stage of the proceedings. Nov. 20 (simultaneously with the confession to Liszt) Wagner writers Uhlig: "Tell Frau Ritter, moreover, that when she gave me the advice, through you, not to 'break' unnecessarily with Weimar, this matter was quite unclear to her; that I am not inimically disposed toward Weimar, whether through pride, caprice or obstinacy, but that I now have something in hand which—of its very nature, and just as it has sprung up in me—admits of no possible consideration of Weimar any more." It was the *force majeure* of an absolute artistic necessity, that was impelling the dramatist: what was waxing to full stature in his brain could not possibly be squeezed into the procrustean bed of any ordinary theatre, be it at Weimar or anywhere else; and Liszt himself, as we shortly shall learn, had no reproaches for his friend.

The new plan, however, is merely in its infancy as yet; it flashes from the mid-October letter to Uhlig, only to flicker like summer-lightning on the far horizon of that letter of the "awful world of mountains" (Oct. 22)—"My Weimar Siegfried is be-

coming more and more problematic—not Siegfried itself." Then once again it flashes out, Nov. 3: "This winter I shall idle for my health, on principle, only sketching as thoughts occur to me. I have three dramas in view (the two Siegfrieds making nos. 2 and 3) and a long prologue. When the whole is finished, I also think of producing it in my own way." A week later,* evidently in answer to a query of Uhlig's inspired by the last announcement, a sort of postscript is added, as an after-thought, to an already voluminous letter: "Prologue: The robbing of the Rhinegold. I. Siegmund and Sieglind: the Valkyrie's punishment. II. and III. you know." That little disconnected postscript gives us the ultimate titles in the rough, and prepares for a fuller account next day:—

At Albisbrunn, November 12, 1851—less than four weeks from the first hint of "three dramas with a three-act prologue," and barely over a year from the earliest fleeting notion of a special theatre—the great Stage-festival scheme is plainly mapped in all essential outlines. To Uhlig is the intimation made: "At present I can tell you but little about the proposed completion of the big dramatic poem. Remember this: before I wrote the poem of my 'Siegfried's Tod' I made a draft of the myth in all its colossal bearings; that poem was my attempt—so far as our Theatre allowed—to give one main catastrophe of the myth, together with a *suggestion* of those bearings. When I approached its musical setting at last, and seriously reflected on [the limitations of] our Theatre, I could but feel the incompleteness of the course proposed: the great conjuncture, through which alone the figures gain their vast significance, was left to mere epic recital, to communication to the thought. To make the 'Death of Siegfried' possible, I therefore wrote my 'Young Siegfried': but the more importance the thing thus acquired, the more did I recognise—when approaching the scenic-musical working-out of 'Young Siegfried'—that I had simply augmented the need of setting the whole conjuncture plainly forth before *the senses*. I now perceive that, to be completely understood from stage to audience, I must give plastic representment to the entire myth. Nor was it this consideration alone, that prompted my change of

* Nov. 11, '51, numbered "44" in the *Letters to Uhlig*, but manifestly written the day *before* Letter "43," as shewn in a previous footnote.

plan, but in particular the thrilling interest of the matter I hence derive for presentation; matter so rich in opportunities for artistic treatment, that it would be a sin to leave it unemployed. Imagine for yourself the contents of Brünnhilde's narration in the last scene of 'Young Siegfried'—the fate of Siegmund and Siegelind; Wodan struggling between his inclination and the moral code (Fricka); the superb rebellion of the Valkyrie; the tragic wrath with which Wodan punishes that defiance—imagine all this as *I* imagine it, with its enormous wealth of situations, embraced in one strenuous drama, and you have a tragedy of the most harrowing effect; whilst it stamps in definite impression on the senses whatever my audience must first have taken up into itself, to understand the 'Young Siegfried' and the 'Death'—without an effort—in their broadest meaning. These three dramas I herald with a lengthy prologue, which is to have an introductory festival day for its exclusive performance: it begins with Alberich, who persecutes the three water-women of the Rhine with his lustful love, is playfully spurned by one after the other, and finally steals the Rhinegold from them in his rage:—this gold itself is but a glittering bauble in the waters (Siegfried's Tod, Act III., sc. i), but another power resides in it, only to be won from it by *him who renounces love.* (Here you have the fashioning motive down to Siegfried's death: imagine for yourself the wealth of consequences.) The capture of Alberich, the assignment of the gold to the two Giant brothers, the swift fulfilment of Alberich's curse, one of them immediately slaying the other, form the subject of this prologue."

The account, which Wagner here breaks short for no lack of matter, was historically too important for us to abridge in the smallest particular; especially as it shews how the author himself shared the predilection of the general public of to-day for that truly Æschyleian tragedy, the drama of *Die Walküre.* In several respects the outline differs from the original prose "Nibelungen Myth" of 1848 (*Prose Works* VII.), notably through introduction of a new motive—the renunciation of Love, for sake of Power; but, so far, we have no indication that the Gods are doomed, i.e. that the larger tragedy is to be given its only sufficient ending. Working backwards, as he then was doing, its author had yet to reach the point where beginning and end are one, and the "Ring" shall become its symbol.

This free-hand outline is both preceded and directly followed by the request to borrow from the Dresden Royal Library a copy of the Volsunga-saga, to refresh his recollection of certain details he had mentally grafted thereon in 1848 (see vol. ii, 275). And then we have the definite adoption of the Festival-scheme, for performance of a work so far beyond the limitations of the modern Theatre that its author cannot hope for its attainment until the whole social system shall itself have been remodelled:—

"Yet one thing *more* determined me to amplify this plan: the felt impossibility of producing even 'Young Siegfried' at all adequately at Weimar—or anywhere else. I neither will nor can put up any longer with the torture of a *half*.—With this new conception of mine I bid *entire* farewell to our Theatre and Public of to-day: I break definitely and for ever with the formal Present. You will ask me, what I intend with my plan, then? —In the first place to *bear it out*, so far as lies in my poetic and musical power: which will occupy me for 3 whole years at least. My existence I therefore absolutely commit to the hands of the Ritters: God grant they may remain undeterredly true to me!—As to a *performance*, I can think of such a thing only after the Revolution: revolution alone can bring me my artists and audience. The next revolution must necessarily put an end to our whole posse of theatres; they must and will all tumble down: that is inevitable. On the Rhine I shall then throw up a theatre, and invite to a great dramatic festival; after a year of preparation, I produce my whole work in the course of *four days:* with it I give to sons and daughters of Revolution the noblest meaning of that revolution. That public will understand me; the present cannot.* Extravagant as this plan may seem, nevertheless it is the only one to which I shall devote my life and energies henceforward. If I live to see its execution, I shall have lived indeed; if not, I shall have died for something fine. This alone can still delight me"—a quarter of a century hence.

The "revolution" was left to the writer alone to fulfil—not a

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* All this passage about the visionary "revolution" was omitted from the published collection of *Letters to Uhlig*, but has since appeared in an article by J. van Santen-Kolff (on "the history of the Bayreuth idea") in the *Bayr. Blätter* 1892, p. 99.

social revolution such as Brünnhilde prophesies soon afterwards in the new ending of his *Siegfried's Tod*, but a revolution in dramatic art. Even such bloodless revolutions call for weapons, however, to cope with the prosaic needs of daily life; and a promise of these may already be guessed from a sentence in the above, concerning the Ritters. A week later our guess is turned to certainty, for Wagner writes Uhlig again (Nov. 20): "That the legacy should have fallen to the Ritter family precisely now, to me seems almost providential: the annuity assigned me by Frau R.* becomes a powerful defence for me against the solicitations of half-and-halfness and vulgarity, as well as a stout weapon against the faintheartedness of our art-world of to-day. Even without this windfall I should not have swerved an inch from my path—you probably know me well enough for that—nor would the latest crisis in my artistic scheme have resolved itself a hair's-breadth otherwise; but I should then have had to endure such trials, cares and struggles, that I must have gone with bitterness and melancholy to what I now shall undertake in utmost gladness. Say this to my dear friend Frau Ritter! Tell her that perhaps she has no idea as yet of *what* she has done for me—maybe for all of us—with her latest promise." Frau Ritter, to whom the whole world of modern culture was thus laid under the profoundest obligation, is also to be told what we have already cited as to Liszt and Weimar.

And what was Liszt told himself, that selfsame day? The letter to Uhlig had opened with the words: "I have just packed the Weimar parcel. It contains 1) a letter three sheets long to Liszt; 2) a letter to Zigesar with 200 thalers (given me by Karl); and 3)—the poem of 'Young Siegfried,' which I now can send Liszt light of heart." Let us take the business question first, to clear it out of our path, just as it cleared Wagner's conscience from an oppressive load.

We have no copy of the letter to Zigesar, but it is sufficiently represented by the following, from the letter enclosing it to Liszt:—"It is truly affecting to me, to be obliged to take leave,

* In July '53 Liszt writes to Princess Wittgenstein: "The Ritter family make him a regular subvention of 1000 écus a year." Taking the French "écu," or crown, of those days as the equivalent of 3 francs, this would be something like £120 per annum; £150 if we assume it to have been thalers, as is more probable.

in a certain sense, of our amiable Zigesar; it is one of the most painful points in all this chapter of explanations.—You know that I had decided to write a new work for *you*, before the pecuniary contract came about between Zigesar and myself; *that* this contract was offered me with such manifest pleasure by our friend, however, made the transaction doubly precious to me. This I sincerely declared to him. Well, it may almost seem pettyfogging, and in a certain sense insulting, if I make restitution of the sum already received by me in pursuance of that contract; for it decidedly was not given to impose an 'obligation' on me—as regards myself and Zigesar—but with the kind desire to free me from household cares as much as possible during the composition of an opera. Nevertheless, this bargain has meanwhile acquired another and more serious aspect, since a successor to Zigesar has been appointed—if only for the time being: in the eyes of that successor in the management, at any rate, I am simply a man under a liability; and as I can no longer execute the order undertaken, I have formally and materially to redeem a contract that can no longer stand. Luckily for me, I have just been placed in a position to relieve you of any unpleasantness on that score." To the ordinary man of business it would be a queer way of regarding a written contract, no doubt, though nothing like so queer as Beethoven's treatment of that with the London Philharmonic concerning the Ninth Symphony; but restitution is honourably made, and both Liszt and Zigesar quite enter into the spirit of the thing, for the former replies with an enclosure from the latter that shews him to be "a most excellent character, on whose friendship you may always rely"—an enclosure acknowledged by its recipient as a fresh obligation to gratitude for its evidence of continued good-feeling.

Together with the cancellation of the contract, its subject is at last despatched. It was long since Liszt had first been promised a copy of the *Young Siegfried* poem; the end of June, in fact. This letter of Nov. 20 fully explains the erst subconscious cause of that delay, in terms already quoted (p. 244 *antea*); the whole thing has become clear to Wagner now, as we read in the continuation of that passage:* "This 'young Siegfried,' also, is

* Which, for sake of a connected survey, I here combine with other portions of the letter in an order slightly different from that of the original.—W. A. E.

nothing but a fragment, and cannot produce its right impression as a *separate* entity until it has taken its appointed place in the *collective* whole. . . . In connection with the other dramas, it will naturally have to be submitted now to several alterations, in particular some beneficial curtailments of the narrative portion. Much will astonish you in it; among other things, its great simplicity and the distribution of the scenes among so very few persons: but imagine this piece performed between the 'Walküre' and 'Siegfried's Tod'—both of which dramas have a far more complicated plot—and this forest-piece, with its dauntless youthful loneliness, will surely make a quite grateful impression of its own.—The poem of my 'young Siegfried' I thus commit to *you*, my dear friend and brother, in the form in which I sketched and wrote it when I still had a separate performance in view. This poem I *now* impart to you with a heart at ease, as you will no longer need to cast an anxious side-glance from it to your public. . . . Now, I know, you will not read it with the fears it must necessarily have inspired in you when you would have had to think of its production at the Weimar theatre, such as it is at present, and such as it cannot else than be. Let us nurse no illusions about that! What you, but only *you*, have hitherto done for me at Weimar, is amazing. . . . But what do you *still* hope from Weimar? With mournful candour I must tell you that I consider your efforts for Weimar themselves quite fruitless. You are making the experience that you have only to turn your back on it, for rank vulgarity to spring luxuriant from the ground, again, on which you had striven to plant the noblest."

There is the plain reason why neither of the "Siegfrieds" could ever have really been produced at Weimar. Wagner knew it from letters of young Bülow, this relapse of the Weimar theatre into its old slovenly rococo so soon as Liszt's back was turned; how were "performers to be trained" for an entirely new style of art, without a more radical cure? And Liszt sadly admits it, in his reply of Dec. 1: "Your very apt and justifiable anxieties about my Weimar sphere of action I leave unanswered; they will prove or refute themselves by facts during the two or three years you are occupied with your Nibelungen." As it is, Liszt has had so much business to attend to during the week since the *Young Siegfried* poem reached him, that he has been unable to find a leisure hour in which to read it! Six weeks later, he

writes: "My hearty thanks for your splendid gift of Siegfried. I have permitted myself to get it read aloud at Zigesar's for the Hereditary Grand Duke and his wife. Zigesar, who had read your poem previously, is quitę enthusiastic about it; and the little circle of about 15 persons, whom he assembled that evening, had been chosen exclusively from the most zealous Wagnerians; consequently, a *crème de la crème!* *—I am very curious as to how you mean to carry out the work in music, what proportions you will give to the movements [or 'periods'—*Sätzen*] and so on" (Jan. 15, '52). Not even now does Liszt altogether abandon the hope of seeing the new work produced for the first time at Weimar some day; but to that too rosy prospect we cannot follow him before he has digested Wagner's explanation (Nov. 20) of the whole proposed scheme of performance.

Of course this explanation covers ground already trodden in the announcement to Uhlig; but it has special points of interest of its own. Beginning with a sentence that prefaces the entire apology, "I am obliged to divulge to you that my resolve to write a new opera for Weimar has been so essentially modified of late, that I can scarcely let it count as such any longer," we shortly arrive at the inner motive:—"I now am most deeply convinced that a dramatic work of art can have its right effect only when the poet's intention is fully conveyed to the senses in all its weightier bearings; and *I*, of all people, neither can nor dare in future sin against the truth which I have recognised. Ergo, to be entirely understood, I must present my whole myth according to its deepest and broadest significance, in utmost artistic distinctness; nothing at all of it can be allowed to remain for supplementing by thought, by reflection: every unbiased human heart must be enabled to seize *the whole*, through its organs of artistic perception, for then alone can it rightly embrace the component parts. . . . Not reflection, however, but enthusiasm, inspired me with my latest plan. This plan now shapes into three dramas: 1, *die Walküre;* 2, *der junge Siegfried;* 3, *Siegfried's*

* It is singular, that Princess Wittgenstein is not mentioned as having been present; still more so, that she does not breathe a syllable about Siegfried, poem or project, in her letter to Wagner enclosed by Liszt with the above. This may partly account for Liszt's venturing no criticism of his own on the actual poem.

Tod. To make everything complete, these three dramas must also be preceded by a long prologue: *der Raub des Rheingoldes.*" We may omit the succeeding description of the first scene of that prologue, just as we have reserved for another occasion a vivid outline of the first of the three dramas proper; but attention should be drawn to the fact that all three of those dramas have already obtained their permanent titles (down to 1863), whilst that of the prologue merely needs abbreviation: a collective title, on the other hand, has not as yet been chosen for what is to be known hereafter as *Der Ring des Nibelungen.*

Now we come to the root of the matter: "A severance of the constituent parts of this great whole I cannot think of, without foredooming my aim to destruction. The whole dramatic complexus must be brought to show in rapid sequence, for the outward compassing of which I can only contemplate the following auspices:—The production of my Nibelungen dramas must take place at a great festival, which will perhaps have to be instituted expressly for it. It must then proceed on three successive days, on the eve whereof the introductory prologue will be given. When I have once brought such a production about, and in such circumstances, the whole may next be repeated on another occasion; thereafter the single dramas, each of which is to form an altogether self-included piece, may be given separately: it is indispensable, however, that the impression to be created by my proposed complete production shall have gone before.—Where, and under what circumstances, such a first production can be accomplished, is by no means a source of instant care to me; for the first thing I have to do, is to complete my big work; and that, with any regard for my health, will keep me busy for at least three years. . . . However audacious, unusual, eh! perhaps fantastic, my plan may seem to you, yet rest assured that it has not sprung from any whim of outward calculation, but has forced itself upon me as the necessary consequence of the nature and contents of the subject, which literally engrosses me and drives me to its execution. To complete it as well as my poetic and musical powers will permit, is the only thing I see before me for the present: nothing beyond need trouble me at all. Nor do I doubt for a moment, knowing your entire way of thinking, but that you will thoroughly agree with me and simply encourage me still further to my purpose, though it must leave at present unfulfilled

a wish of yours—a wish so flattering to myself—to produce a new work of mine again right soon."

That is the settled plan of the most stupendous artistic creation of the nineteenth century, a-brooding ever since the completion of *Lohengrin* in 1848. On the lines thus laid down in November 1851 was it fulfilled to the letter at Bayreuth in August 1876. Much lay between; but unfalteringly was the work pursued till but a third of the music remained unwritten. Had those "auspicious circumstances" but shewed themselves with several degrees more alacrity, the 'fifties need never have passed away without triumphant realising of a Festival unequalled since the marvels of old Greece.

Liszt, from whom some resentment at this total change of front might have been pardonably expected, now rises to the full height of the situation. True, not having read the new poem as yet, he labours under a slight misapprehension as to the nature of the mythic subject; but he may readily be excused for knowing no more of the *Nibelungenlied*, with which he confounds it, than many a critic of much later days. The cardinal point is the implicit confidence he reposes in his friend's ability to carry out what most people would have flatly denounced as a monstrous freak. "Your letter, my glorious friend, has highly delighted me," he writes Dec. 1: "On your extraordinary road you have arrived at an extraordinarily great goal. The task of converting the Nibelungen-epos into a dramatic and musical trilogy is worthy of you, and I do not entertain the smallest doubt of the monumental success of your work. My sincerest interest, my heartiest sympathy, are so ensured to you as to need no further words.—Your term of 3 years may alter outward circumstances largely in your favour. Perhaps you may soon return to Germany, as several newspapers are already announcing [see p. 248]. Perhaps I, too, may have other means at my disposal by the time of termination of your Siegfried. Only gird yourself up, and keep regardlessly to your work; for which one might propound the same programme as the Chapter of Seville once gave the architect for the building of its cathedral: 'Build us such a temple that future generations shall say, the Chapter was crazy to undertake so extraordinary a thing.' Yet there the cathedral stands."

It was the right note to strike, and banished Wagner's last

doubt. "I have shewn your letter to everybody in the least intimate with me," he replies, "and told them, See the sort of friend I have!" To Frau Ritter he sends it, to prove how groundless were her fears of a rupture with Weimar. Uhlig he asks if he has read it: "Is not that a magnanimous fellow?" And Liszt himself he tells, with that responsiveness which ever treated a heartfelt encouragement as the most priceless of boons: "To have been so understood by you with respect to an enterprise that not merely was bound to cross your personal desires, but whose wellnigh bottomless foolhardiness must make it almost inconceivable except to him who feels driven to it by an inner necessity—this, my dearest Liszt, makes me as happy as if my scheme had succeeded already" (Dec. 14, '51).

Liszt's confidence, to tell the truth, has somewhat overshot the mark; not yet has he grasped the full necessity for an altogether unique frame in which to set this unique work. In that letter reporting the reading at Zigesar's, he proceeds: "Do buckle to it soon; perhaps you can finish the whole work in even less than 3 years. As for the performance, it surely can be managed somewhere by following your orders and instructions precisely. With all the genius of your fancy, you are too eminently experienced and practical to write anything inexecutable. Difficulties are necessary—to be surmounted. Should you not (as I decline to assume) have returned to Germany yourself by then, commission me with the whole affair, and you shall have nothing but the trouble of drawing me up a detailed programme of all you wish and require for the performance, to which I will rigorously adhere —people and things shall be got for it. I hope, however, to have the pleasure of enjoying your Nibelungen-trilogy more tranquilly from the stalls or balcony, and invite you to supper in the Hôtel de Saxe (Dresden) or Hôtel de Russie (Berlin) after each of the 4 evenings, if you have any appetite left for meat and drink after all your exertions."

Dresden! Berlin!—Impossible. Not though restored by providence to Royal favour, could Wagner have consented to produce this prodigy amid the bustle of a capital—even had there been any likelihood of an established theatre's consenting to risk its money on the venture of mounting it. The plan was too vast to be contained within a city's walls; it needed space, free air, a holiday repose. So much of the exceptional did it need, that

there is a note almost of despair in Wagner's answer to his friend: "In respect of the performance of my Nibelungen dramas, good sympathetic friend, you view my future in too bright a light: I do not count on their production at all, at least not in *my* lifetime, and least of all at Berlin or Dresden. These and similar great cities, with their public, exist for me no more: for my audience I can imagine none but an assemblage of friends, who shall forgather expressly to make acquaintance with my work, no matter where; preferably in some sleepy hollow (*schöne Einöde*) far from the din and pestilential stenches of our commercial towns. Such a solitude I could behold in Weimar at most, but certainly in no larger town" (Jan. 30, '52). The note of depression is transitory, a mood engendered by local disappointments and another access of ill-health; permanent is the absolute refusal to connect this festival scheme with any bustling centre. If it is ever to be accomplished, it must be in some retired nook where no tradition holds its sway. A field near Zurich, the shores of the Rhine, a corner of the ducal park at Weimar—no matter which, or where, at present: the work must first be composed, but composed without a moment's side-glance at the existing Operatic stage. But for anachronism, it must be called point-blank the *Bayreuth idea.*

It was this that Wagner proclaimed to the world, in the new ending given to the *Communication* just before it left the printers' hands (p. 176 *antea*): "I now intend to set forth my myth in *three entire dramas*, preceded by a lengthy *prologue.* With these dramas, though each of them is to constitute a self-included whole, I have no 'repertory-piece' in view, but shall abide by the following plan of performance:—At a Festival expressly instituted I propose some day to bring out those three dramas and their prologue *in course of three days and a fore-evening:* the object of that representation I shall deem completely attained if I and my artistic partners, the actual performers, shall in those four evenings have artistically succeeded in *conveying my aim to the emotional* (not the critical) *understanding* of spectators assembled to make its acquaintance. A further issue is as indifferent to me as I cannot but think it superfluous . . . for one thing at least is certain: with *this* undertaking I have no more to do with our *existing* Theatre" (*P.* I. 391).

A public challenge scarcely less heroic than the private inspiration of a year ago, to "burn the score" of *Siegfried's Tod* after a triad of performances: "A further issue is indifferent to me."

Only in so prodigal a spirit could a masterwork like this have been conceived. Yet Liszt, with his riper knowledge of the world, was in one respect a better prophet than his friend: his simile of the cathedral of Seville came true. The work originally intended as a flat contradiction of the Monumental—became itself a monument; a monument requiring untold sums for its erection "under given circumstances," erected at a "time and place" remote indeed, and to-day established, after half a century, as the type unrivalled of a "monumental success." For Fate, stepmotherly enough to its creator, reserved a loving irony for his colossal scheme, and made his work immortal.

VI

ZURICH'S OPPORTUNITY.

New quarters at Zurich; water versus wine; a fallacious cure.—Georg Herwegh; his influence, literary and otherwise.—More Zurich friends and acquaintances: the ladies; Otto and Mathilde Wesendonck.—Concerts of the Zurich 'Panharmonic'; Spyri's friendly newspaper; an awe-struck committee.—Explanatory programme for the Eroica.*—Conductor Abt's jealousy.—Festival-concert projected as part of a larger scheme; abandoned for lack of support.—Three more 'Panharmonic' concerts (early* 1852)*:—Beethoven's Eighth and* Egmont; *secret of conducting.* Coriolanus *overture with printed explanation; attitude toward programme-music.—*Tannhäuser *overture; phenomenal reception; its explanatory programme under two aspects.—Minor articles: "On Musical Criticism"; "Baumgartner's Songs"; on interpreting Beethoven.—*Flying Dutchman *at the Zurich theatre: "if I must"; revised score; progressive success of a week of performances.—Tired out.*

> *If you wish to have* the whole *of me, then do your share to make it possible.*
>
> RICHARD WAGNER (proposed motto for a Zurich concert).

"I SHALL pass the winter in dawdling as agreeably as I can—the only thing that comes a little hard to me—so as to proceed next summer in full health and vigour to the greatest work of my life": so Wagner writes F. Heine in December '51. "Two things I lack, before I can begin the composition [of *Tannhäuser*]: rest and—comfort"—he had written Pusinelli in the summer of 1843—"The rest I long for, however, is not that of the idler, but a concentration of energy. Many a year, perhaps, must pass ere I reach that harmonious rest; nevertheless in the coming winter I hope to be able at least to satisfy my longing for external comfort: and that in itself counts for much,

since outward discomfort can torture one to the marrow."* That was eight years earlier than the period at which we have arrived; but it was not only a message to a friend— it was a symptom reported to a physician: on the eve of the creation of the *Ring des Nibelungen* we find the symptom cropping out again. It was a modest "comfort," after years and years of hardship, attained by Wagner even in his most prosperous days at Dresden: it is a modest comfort he now seeks to secure at Zurich, a quiet little nest in which to hatch that sitting of four stupendous eggs.

The Ritter family, by the grant of a fixed annuity, had enabled him to set his household on a stabler footing; and Minna's visit to Albisbrunn at the end of October ('51) was probably connected with arrangements for removal to a more convenient abode. In any case, when Wagner leaves the hydro on the 23rd November, it is to proceed to new quarters in the Vordere Escherhäuser, commune of Hottingen; a building in which he remained, though with a later change of floor, down to his migration to the "green hill" in 1857. In the "hinder" block of the same group of tenements he had already dwelt in 1849-50, between his two expeditions to Paris: now he has established himself in the better-class building directly off a main road, the Zeltweg. Doubtless his partiality for this quarter of the town, in which he thus passed by far the greater portion of his Zurich period, is to be explained by the proximity of the Hohe Promenade, separated from the Escherhäuser by nothing but a shady avenue and the well-kept public cemetery. From the raised Promenade, with its alley of tall chesnuts and limes, delightful peeps of the lake were presented on the one side, while the other offered solemn glimpses of resting-places of the dead. At the end of the Promenade is a monument to Nägeli,† with a stone bench and a little table: local tradition denotes it as a favourite resort of

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* A selection of 38, out of a total of 80, letters written by Wagner to Dr Anton Pusinelli of Dresden in the years 1843 to 1877 has recently been published in the *Bayr. Blätter* (1902, Part IV.), shewing how intimate and confidential was the friendship between these two men; see vol. ii, 38.

† Hans Georg Nägeli is referred-to in *A Theatre at Zurich* (1851) as the originator of Swiss vocal unions; with the bust of him Wagner was none too well satisfied—as we may see in his letter of Jan. 1, '58, to Liszt—and one of the Wagnerian phrases current in Zurich was "to make as wry a face as

Wagner's whenever the weather was fine; and on this spot, so he assured his very first Sieglinde (Frau Heim), he received in the gloaming his inspiration for the Death-herald scene in *Die Walküre*.

The Vordere Escherhäuser was a barrack-like old house, let to many tenants; the Wagners' rooms were on the ground-floor, to the left of the entrance. "Very small, but quiet and homelike," he describes them to Uhlig five days after he has taken possession: "With a truly childish delight I add some little thing each day, to make our refugee establishment completer and more agreeable.* Thus I have just had my 'collected works' bound up in red: there are five volumes of them already; the 'three opera-poems' will make the sixth." *Opera and Drama* would account for three of these volumes, the *Art-work of the Future* for another, and *Art and Revolution* with the *Wibelungen* and perhaps *A Theatre at Zurich* for the fifth. His carefully-selected Dresden library had been transferred to Leipzig some time back by brother-in-law F. Brockhaus as security for an outstanding debt, which he now proposes to settle; with what success, is more than doubtful. His own scores, however, he gets despatched to him from Dresden, giving minute instructions for the emendation of the *Tannhäuser* for his "own privy library." †

It is quite a time of minor present-giving and receiving. Uhlig obtains as Christmas-box the original MS of *Oper und*

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chorus-father Nägeli." We may picture the offending monument tripping Wagner up in some of his best ideas, but the preference for jotting his dramatic and musical sketches in the open air is further shewn by the episode of a summer-house above Fluntern to be narrated presently, and still later by the summer-house at Biebrich in which much of the music for act i of *Die Meistersinger* came to the composer as he watched the Rhine flow by.

* According to Herr Steiner (loc. cit.) Wagner was no longer, technically speaking, a fugitive; on the representation of the Zurich Director of Police, Regierungsrath Bollier (a lover of music, and hence a friend of the composer's), the Bundesrath of the Swiss Federation had removed his name from the list of refugees on the 4th of November 1850, and granted him the right of residence for one year, thus sparing him the purposeless annoyance of police-supervision and periodical reports to Berne. The right of residence had to be renewed every year; in his case a mere matter of form. A recent renewal is to be inferred from the passing allusion above.

† Instructions which prove that the prelude to the third act had already been curtailed at Dresden, probably from the second performance onwards; compare *Prose Works* III. 183 with this letter to Uhlig of Dec. 13, '51.

Drama "bound in red"; Baumgartner, for the same festival, is presented with one of the "autograph" scores of Tannhäuser, "handsomely bound, since he has bought all my other things for hard-earned cash." On the other side of the ledger, Liszt is asked for his medallion, to add to "the Penates of a small, but at last again a pleasant home. If you have also a really good portrait, please give me that for Christmas too: you need not be ashamed of hanging on my wall, where Beethoven will be your only company besides Cornelius' Nibelungen-plate" (see vol. ii, 322). Then "Frau Ritter has set me up so lavishly with scores and silver-plate, that a regular devil has entered into me, to make my home as comfortable as possible." A fatal gift, that silver plate, perhaps worse than a diamond scarfpin; it has a knack of becoming a standard of measurement, a perpetual incentive to procuring other things to match.

How Minna helped to make the new home comfortable, after the first flurry and excitement of setting everything in order, may be divined from three significant words in a letter to Uhlig of but seven weeks after the removal to the Zeltweg: "For the recovery of my youth, for health, nature, an unreservedly loving wife and a flock of children—I would barter *all my art!* There, take it! Give me the other!" (Jan. 12, '52). In the seclusion of Albisbrunn the mood had been brighter; but what Wagner had attributed to the effect of hydropathy, was evidently more the consequence of a temporary respite from domestic jars. Yet he had returned to Zurich expressly for celebration of the fifteenth anniversary of their marriage, Nov. 24, when Minna and he gave a small house-warming party: "Last Monday, our wedding-day, my Federals spent the evening with me; they tippled as usual, and my disgust at this wine-bibbing, that doesn't even strike one spark of humour from these luckless men, convinced me that I am cured in fact. I cannot conceive what misfortune should ever drive me to take refuge in wine, beer, and so on, again."

Presumably these "Federals" did not take so very much more than was customary among the middle-classes of those days, for Wagner's Swiss friends were all of them men of local standing, with serious occupations. But the zeal of the neophyte was upon him just then; the water-cure had "worked wonders," as he fondly imagined awhile: "I am basking in a sense of well-being such as I had never conceived. My indomitable cheerfulness

and good spirits—which have not deserted me despite the exhaustion consequent on the severity of the latter part of my cure—supply me with an unfailing answer to all silly chaff; for instance, that I have no need of wine to make me merry, and can get on capitally without the hot coppers of next day, and so on." At Albisbrunn he had been condemned in the end to baths of but 7 degrees above freezing-point; at home he has raised their temperature to the more civilised limit of 55° F, but mental rest is strictly enjoined on him, together with a diet which he describes as "dry bread and milk for breakfast, dry bread and water for supper; at midday English cooking, i.e. vegetables boiled plain and meat roasted on the spit, which my wife has had to procure." The water business he still has so at heart, that he writes to Sulzer a defence of it 3 quarto pages long, though the only extract published by Herr Steiner does not make clear whether outward or internal application is the bone of contention: "As I could not possibly subside into a merely casual acquaintance with a man who has been and is, at a crucial period of my life, what you have been and still are to me; a man I sincerely respect in the warmest sense of which that word is capable—the ultimate consequence [of Sulzer's recusance] would be that I must give my Zurich haven up; a necessity I feel so deeply that I was compelled to declare it yesterday to our two friends." It is difficult to believe that such earnestness has reference to nothing more serious than a divergence of views on the efficacy of water; but, however we interpret it, Herr Steiner further informs us that, rather than allow the split to go to such a length, Sulzer made certain "concessions."

As for Wagner himself, departure from a strict observance of cold water soon was forced upon him by the same consideration that had started it—his health. All through this winter, in fact until next autumn, we hear of one modification or another, in the endeavour to restore a shattered set of nerves, culminating in the lesson of experience passed on to Uhlig next October: "Our water-doctors, one and all, don't know enough about nerve-troubles. Constitutions like mine are benefited by none but *warm* baths, whereas cold ones ruin them entirely. If I can only get my nerves right, you'll hear another story!" The same with his teetotalism, which is wisely abandoned at last for an occasional glass of good wine. Had he but had his good Dresden doctor

Pusinelli within arm's-length, instead of the various experimenters on a bodily constitution they understood as little as his critics his artistic theories, perhaps the music for the *Nibelungen* might have actually been finished in not much over the three years originally propounded for its term. But the awl of the amateur health-cobbler was picked up first by one friend, then by another, till the letter last-quoted avows: "For the present my doctor is Herwegh: he has great knowledge of physics and physiology, and is more sympathetic towards me, in every respect, than any physician who is not at the same time a *friend*."

This Herwegh, whose name recurs so often in the next few years, makes an unprepared appearance on our stage: "Herwegh and I are trying to get Feuerbach to come here." That, written to Uhlig Dec. 3, '51, is the first mention of Georg Herwegh —subsequently figuring as "St George" at times—in any of Wagner's letters hitherto published; whilst the earliest mention of his name to Liszt occurs in a letter of March '52 already-cited (p. 217 *antea*). In the latter case it is not surprising that we have no explanation, since Liszt must have met this political poet during the 'forties in the company of George Sand and so on, at anyrate had set music to several of his songs, notably his *Rheinweinlied* and *Reiterlied*. In the former case the absence of any preamble suggests an approximate date for the commencement of a friendship of considerable value to Wagner on the intellectual side: during his Swiss visit, of last July, Uhlig must have been introduced to Herwegh, as to a quite recent acquaintance of his host's. Whoever brought the two together, they already had one friend in common, the unfortunate Bakunin, with whom each had formerly associated in Dresden, though at different epochs. Herwegh himself was an exile, owing to his foolhardy republican exploit in Baden of April '48; since when he had lived at Geneva and Nice previous to his unspecified arrival in Zurich. His revolutionary ardour had sensibly cooled down by now, but he was suffering from another trouble, intensified by the malice of political opponents; an affair involving the honour of his sometime friend Alex. von Herzen, with the rights or wrongs of which we have nothing to do, though it will place Wagner in a rather delicate position some four years hence, when he meets Herzen in London. Herwegh had married the daughter of a rich Jewish banker in Berlin, but for the present was staying alone at the

Hôtel Baur au Lac, temporarily separated 'by mutual consent' from his wife, whom he had left with their children in Italy (by 1853, at all events, she had rejoined him). It was a lounging life he was leading at Zurich, and we constantly find Wagner remarking "St George is still lazy, but I shall *make* him work." His *Gedichte eines Lebendigen* had once created great sensation, but for some time past he had practically given up all literary activity, apparently ruined by too easy circumstances; nevertheless Frau Wille records a statement of Wagner's that his friend had lately written poems which, if published, "would render him immortal as the Bard of Love."

The contrast between the temperaments of these two men was great, more especially in their degrees of bodily and mental *energy;* yet one cannot but feel that Herwegh is in part responsible for the tendency to personal extravagance that now begins to shew itself in Wagner's life. Nothing could be more infectious, than the companionship of a man whose favourite occupation consisted in sprawling on the sofa; though the example be not copied physically, the "sofa" attitude is apt to get reflected on one's private estimate of ways and means, however faintly at first. On the other hand, Georg Herwegh brought to Wagner a something new in his surroundings—the breath of a broader culture. Since the days of intimacy with Heinrich Laube, it would be gross flattery to say of Wagner's companions, with the marked exception of Liszt and Bakunin—from both of whom he was separated by adverse circumstances—that they belonged to any larger world. They all were what the Germans call "kleinstädtisch," perhaps a step higher than what we in England call "provincial." Even Schumann, the biggest of them, was absolutely unqualified to play a part in any but the world of music and its literature. The great profit to be derived from Herwegh's friendship, was that this blasé idler had really been once in the broad current of thought, in the stream where wit clashed against wit and clumsiness sank to the bottom—in a word, in literary Paris. It is amusing to note how the provincials regarded him: Frau Wille, their representative chronicler, describes him as "sprung from the people, but resembling more a marquis from the period of the regency, than a tribune of the people who feels it his mission to proclaim the unalterable rights of manhood as with thunders of the Last

Judgment. . . . His voice was suave and pleasing, but when it came to passion, it failed for lack of power: he had not the full chest-notes of a spirit mightily stirred by anger or love"; presumably the good lady—and she *was* a good motherly soul —is referring to his mode of reciting his poems.

As the old proverb says, it takes all sorts to make a world. If proof were needed of Wagner's qualification to rank as dramatist, it would be found in this capacity of his for associating on the most cordial footing with every variety of human character: he has a positively Shakespearian fondness for all sorts and conditions of men. The very laziness of Herwegh, so contrary to his own nature, he treats with a paternal lenience, though the man was but four years his junior; it was a type, to be studied, rather than lectured. For all his laziness, however, Herwegh introduced a floating atmosphere of form and finish, perhaps a friendly criticism less heavy-footed than that of Dr Franck, of Stahr, or Uhlig, less hyperbolic than of Carolyszt.* What his verdict may have been on the texts of *Lohengrin* and its two predecessors, or on the two *Siegfrieds* themselves, we have no means of telling; but there can scarcely be two opinions on the literary superiority of the poems of *Die Walküre* and *Das Rheingold*, which had their birth soon after intimacy had taken root, and when Wagner and Herwegh were wellnigh inseparable. Herwegh was far too lazy to have helped, of course, in the sense of collaboration; but communion with such a cultivated intellect would undoubtedly heighten the standard erected by Wagner for his own technique. And Herwegh—obviously Herwegh—introduced him to a field of literature he had not yet explored. Hitherto, beyond Shakespeare, Racine, Homer and the Greek tragedians, we have not encountered any allusion by Wagner to poets other than those of his fatherland: now we find him suddenly interested in Byron, Shelley—and the Persian Hafiz; the lyric wealth of other nations is being opened up to him (in translation) with untold benefit to his sense of form.

So, companionship with this sofa-loving Herwegh was by no

* As it is impossible to go on speaking of "Liszt's" literary essays etc., now that we know them to have been so largely the work of Princess Carolyne Sayn-Wittgenstein, I hope to be pardoned for condensing the two names into one, in which the lady's "y" may typify the same sort of effect on the simpler "Liszt" as it exerts on certain familiar English patronymics.—W. A. E.

means an unmixed evil. Thank heavens, however, their joint project for inducing the Bruckberg logic-chopper to emigrate to Zurich was not to be fulfilled. "To-day I have written to Feuerbach. I am trying, with Herwegh, to get him here: at first on a visit to ourselves. If it succeeds, our circle will become wider and more and more attractive" (to Uhlig, Dec. 3, '51). There the matter luckily ended, apparently, for Feuerbach is not mentioned to Uhlig again in any connection; though a request of Roeckel's nearly two years later brings that tiresome philosophast once more into the foreground (Sept. '53), only to be permanently effaced after the lapse of another twelvemonth by the infinitely more congenial Schopenhauer.

As to the "circle" above referred to, we have no particulars at first hand—apart from the Swiss friends already named. Semper, whom Wagner had previously attempted to secure for it, was not to arrive till four years hence. In all probability it now included, "off and on," three world-famed German professors: K. F. W. Ludwig, Theodor Mommsen, and E. M. L. Ettmüller. Under Ludwig (according to Frau Wille) Herwegh amused himself by studying physiology; as professor of which science, together with that of anatomy, Ludwig had been appointed to a chair at the Zurich university in 1849. On Wagner's side an acquaintance with Ludwig is suggested by a passage in the third part of *Opera and Drama* (*P.* II. 272-3), where a morsel of physiological knowledge is used for an analogy: one of the very rare appearances of 'natural science' in Wagner's writings.—Mommsen, the celebrated archæologist and historian, had been deposed from his professorship of jurisprudence at Leipzig in 1850 for political reasons, and since had pitched his tent in Switzerland. As he becomes professor of Roman Law at Zurich in the Spring of 1852, we reasonably may add him to the "circle," in which he certainly appears when it is extended to embrace the Willes. The sympathy of fellow-sufferers would form a link between him and our two chief friends.—Ettmüller, a great authority on old German and Scandinavian folk-lore, had been established as professor of German Literature at the Zurich Gymnasium since 1833, where he earned from his pupils the affectionate nickname of "der grimme Schelch," in allusion to the fabulous elk of the Nibelungenlied. The point of contact between him and

Wagner is manifest, and we have Frau Wille's word for it that these two were more than casual acquaintances before Wagner's first visit to herself and husband at Mariafeld in May '52.—To round the little circle off, we may mention its presumable place of reunion, perhaps the centre from which it had been drawn, namely the house of Hermann Marschall von Bieberstein. On the last day of the Dresden rebellion we met von Bieberstein in the company of Richard Wagner (vol. ii, 354): by now he had settled down at Zurich as insurance-agent and editor of a newspaper (*Zürcher Tagblatt**), and indulged in frequent entertaining. At this hospitable house we know that Wagner made his first acquaintance with the Wesendoncks (*vid. inf.*), and probably it was here that he renewed acquaintance with the philologist Dr Köchly, also late of Dresden (see vol. ii, 134).

Apropos of social gatherings, people seem to have begun to take the Wagners 'up' in this winter of 1851-2; not very much to the husband's taste. Previously we had heard of only one festivity in Switzerland: "To-day is the great Zurich fête, and I'm off to the banquet" (to Uhlig, May 1, '51). At the beginning of February '52 Uhlig is told, "Last evening, my wife having gone to the ball, I devoted to reading your articles," and so on. Minna was always partial to society, and the immediate consequence of that (subscription?) dance is that the Zurich gentry now commence to leave their cards: "A few new acquaintances have forced themselves upon me," her husband writes Uhlig, Feb. 26. It is as well that she was not looking over his shoulder, for he continues: "On the male side they are most indifferent to me; less so on the female. Thus with some Swiss families of the local aristocracy (I speak of the women alone!) I am surprised to find so much vivacity, even charm. I hasten to add: Have no fear for me! 'Twill come to no 'scandal.' Indeed I can take no more delight in human-, not even in woman-kind; still, this latter element remains the only one that can help me to illusions, off and on: as for the males, I have done with all illusion. Thus I blow quite fine soap-bubbles here, from time to time: as soon as our balmy atmosphere makes one explode, it amuses me to send another soaring up again." To obviate misapprehension,

* None too friendly in its comments on the Zurich *Dutchman* of next April, as we shall presently learn.

attention should be called to the irony of that "balmy atmosphere" —in the depth of a Zurich winter! The soap-bubbles were not these charming ladies' reputations, but illusions connected with the possibility of making Zurich an active foster-mother to his art. Three weeks later, the *Tannhäuser* overture having made a profound sensation, Wagner writes once more (March 20): "I'm terribly fatigued again; but in sight of Spring and the commencement of my poem, I pluck up heart. Don't call me vain if I also admit to you that the wonderful effects I am spreading around me restore me now and then to a pleasurable sense of existence; again and again it is the 'eternal womanly' that fills me with sweet illusions and warm thrills of joy-in-life. The glistening moisture of a woman's eye endues me often with fresh hope." To Roeckel he had said last August: "In our talks of old, how often did we come to this conclusion:—We never shall be what we might and ought to be, till *woman is awoken.*"

There lay not only the hope, but the peril. The "awakening of woman" was not to be compassed by balls and routs; and the sole awakening Minna knew, was that of a philistine suspicion. It was no manner of use, to bid Uhlig fear no "scandal";* Richard Wagner's wife had that peculiar narrowness of mind which too readily converts the most innocent intimacy between opposite sexes into a cause of deadly jealousy, and eventually of venomous gossip, through the very fact of its being on a plane above the vulgar comprehension. Thus the seeds of a great future calamity were being sown almost at the moment when Richard bids his friend to have no fear; for there can be little doubt as to the owner, par excellence, of that sympathetically humid eye.

No woman that ever came into close relation with a famous man has been treated with such gross injustice, to say nothing of indelicacy, as MATHILDE WESENDONCK. On the threshold of this purely platonic friendship it therefore becomes a duty to denounce the base insinuations, often worse, with which too many of the would-be portrayers of Richard Wagner have defiled their pages in recent days, quite reckless of the fact that the female victim of their calumnies was still alive (1902). Upon what

* Obviously alluding to the Bordeaux mystery of the Spring of 1850; see p. 41 *antea.*

evidence do these defamers found their charge? The hoary on-dits of outsiders and the tantrums of an inveterately distrustful wife. In England the law holds both man and woman innocent until *proved* guilty; unfortunately some German and transatlantic writers appear to hold them guilty until proved innocent, nay, sometimes in defiance of that most difficult of proofs; and the English critic, impressed by an air of omniscience with which he feels all impotent to cope, gathers up the crumbs that fall from his foreign colleague's table as if they were jewels of truth. Personally, I have not the smallest sympathy with the foolish desire to represent Richard Wagner as a saint; but I do insist upon the proofs demanded by common fairness, in any case where he is branded as a sinner, especially when it involves the character of the respected mother of a family. In this instance no contradiction can be too emphatic. No one privileged to have been admitted to the society of Frau Wesendonck for even five minutes, could imagine this serenely spiritual lady as once the heroine of what the scandal-mongers, with vulgar grossness of refraction, have called a "Tristan and Isolde" romance. Unhappily, the "not guilty" of an accusee is treated with scant credence by the world, or I could adduce a letter written to myself some ten years back,* in which this calumny is given the lie in terms most touchingly convincing. But since the publication of Wagner's letters to the late Herr Otto Wesendonck, it is nothing less than devilish for any one to breathe the faintest slur upon the latter's widow. Only two or three months after what is commonly known as the "Zurich catastrophe" of August 1858, the Wesendoncks were bereaved of a little son—a bereavement pharisaically interpreted by Minna as a "judgment" of the Almighty! From Venice promptly came a letter of Wagner's to *the father;* one of

† Elicited by the share I then took in the exposure of Praeger's *Wagner as I knew him*, where the innuendo made its first impertinent appearance in the English tongue.—Since the above was set up, I have learnt the sad news that Frau Wesendonck died last August 29 (1902), aged 74. Slight as had been my own acquaintance, I wish to add my humble tribute to that contained in the current issue of the *Bayr. Bl.:* "A true exemplar of noble womanhood, of delicacy, purity, high sympathy. . . . The world's aspersions could never mar that inner harmony prevailing to the last between the reverenced lady and those who still bear in the world the great man's name, his family, his house, for whom we speak."—W. A. E.

the most beautiful and sincere of threnodies. It begins, "Dear Wesendonck—My last words to your wife were my blessing on the rearing of your children!—Your news has profoundly shocked me. Accept the brimming tears of a friend, as tribute of his love!—The children, too, had become very dear to me. I shall sadly miss the little Guido when I think of your house!—O heavens! All is so earnest, so earnest." It ends, "And so—above the early grave of the dear little fellow—thanks!—and a heartfelt farewell!—Your Richard Wagner." With *those* words crying loud to him, how dare a reputable author revive the prurient garbage? And less than a year after that letter Wagner writes, again to Otto Wesendonck: "The four bright days [lately passed] on your hospitable hill have had for me a fair significance. They live in me still; as pledges of a noble happiness, such as never can be given, but solely won. Let us hold it fast!"

In the lady's vindication, I need add nothing to the last two extracts: I have myself alone to vindicate, for peering so far into the future. Had there been any possibility of reaching the year 1858 before the present volume's close, I would gladly have left the subject unmooted until that period had brought it round. Such a possibility being out of the question, I have felt it absolutely imperative to extirpate the falsehood in advance, lest it haply taint the reader's mind. For we shall be brought into frequent contact with Otto and Mathilde Wesendonck from the Spring of 1852 onward.

"It was in 1852," Frau Wesendonck writes to the *Allg. Mus. Ztg* (1896, pp. 92-3), "that we made the personal acquaintance of Richard Wagner, at the house of his Dresden friends, the family Marschall von Bieberstein." Herr Otto, a Rhinelander and younger brother to a member of the Frankfort Parliament, had recently settled in Zurich as representative of a New York commercial house, apparently connected with the silk trade—that being Zurich's staple industry. Rich, and generous with his money, he was a man of cultivated taste and refined manners. About a year junior to Wagner, he was consequently in the prime of life and vigour, most suitably mated with a sweet young wife. She, a native of Düsseldorf, graceful, attractive, and of an amiability that springs from true unselfishness of heart, was gifted with a quick intelligence and much poetry of feeling; though her mind, as she expresses it, at present resembled "a blank sheet of

paper, on which Wagner undertook to write." The relationship of this trio is fairly expressed in the following bantering passage from a letter of Wagner's to Herr Otto when the acquaintance was but a few months old: "How goes it with Donna Mathilde's studies in thorough-bass? Let us hope she will have finished her first fugue by the time I return; then I will teach her to write operas *à la* Wagner, so that she may put her knowledge to some use! Afterwards you'll have to sing in them: we can translate your part into English, you know" (July 20, '52). It was a cordial intimacy, shared equally by husband and wife, and not excluding Minna till she ultimately made things difficult for all. Appreciative sympathy and open-handed help stood ever at Wagner's service in the Wesendonck household. If there was any real danger for him in this association, it was a danger similar to that of the association with Herwegh: the danger of proximity to a standard of expenditure far above what he had been accustomed to. Provisionally established in the fashionable hotel, where Herwegh also was staying, the Hôtel Baur au Lac, Otto Wesendonck hereafter built himself and family a splendid villa in a suburb of the town.

For Zurich it was a time of material expansion; political commotions in Germany and Austria had driven many and many a wealthy family into voluntary or involuntary exile. "Hundreds of elegant dwellings are being built this year, on account of the growing incursion of cultured and well-to-do strangers, who are settling here to escape the odiousness of the rest of Europe"—writes Wagner to Uhlig this winter 1851-2. In such circumstances it was by no means fantastic, to contemplate the possibility of making the environs of Zurich the eventual site of a festival-theatre for the *Nibelungen* trilogy.

The idea was to be carried out by easy stages. In the first place, a Wagner-concert in the summer of '52; in '53 a model stage-performance of his three "romantic operas"; then, the Zurich public having been educated up to the due pitch, it would be time to commence the agitation for a special *Nibelungen* festival. The latter clause, though not expressed in black on white,* is obviously implicit in the "ulterior intentions" which

* After the original inspiration of Sept. '50 (then for *Siegfried's Tod* alone) we do not definitely hear of a coupling of the Dramatic Festival with Zurich before a letter of June '53 to Roeckel.

Wagner already connects with the concert project. And, looked at from the standpoint of the present day, the idea does not strike one as at all impracticable, when one has realised not only Zurich's central situation and material wealth, but also Wagner's artistic reputation there.

To grasp the exact position, we must revert to a point only partially dealt with in Chapter II. There we saw our hero at the Zurich theatre for about two months of the past winter season. Now let us follow him into the concert-room, where he made, in fact, his first public appearance in Switzerland.

An old engraving shews the Zurich Casino as a building that might have furnished Gottfried Semper with an illustration of the hideousness evoked by the endeavour to harmonise Greek architecture with modern requirements. It is precisely the sort of structure erected at every spa or watering-place in the early part of the nineteenth century: a row of tall round-topped windows pierced in a dead wall of blank masonry, with a bald Ionic portico projecting from the middle third. The music to fit such an elevation, one feels instinctively, should never be more passionate than a Haydn symphony. In the main hall of this soulless building were held the annual six subscription-concerts of the Zurich Allgemeine Musikgesellschaft—which, for brevity's sake, we will henceforth call the Panharmonic. Franz Abt, a successful composer of philistine jujubes, established at Zurich for the last decad, was the society's regular conductor at this epoch. Shortly after Wagner's first settlement in Zurich, however, his friend Alexander Müller combined with Hagenbuch, a member of the committee, to get him invited to conduct a symphony of Beethoven's, by way of exception. Intrepid man, he chose the Seventh! What he thought of the very inferior band, we have already heard: let us now hear what the Zurichers thought of him. True, it is Spyri who speaks, or at anyrate edits, and Spyri is a friend of Wagner's; but how had he come to be a friend? Simply and solely through personal communion with the outlaw during the past few months; he had nothing whatever to gain by advocating Wagner's cause, and his advocacy is the outcome of sincere enthusiasm. Remember also that this was before the *Lohengrin* production at Weimar, before the sheaf of favourable notices strewn far and wide by Liszt and his lieutenants, and you

will concede that this young Swiss editor is to be numbered with Wagner's earliest, most enlightened, and most effectual champions. Evidently Spyri has been admitted to one or two of those rehearsals by which the conductor worked himself into a good humour with what seemed at first a hopeless task, for this is what he publishes in the *Eidg. Ztg* of January 15, 1850:—

"The Zurich public is offered to-day a musical treat of exceptional quality. One of the greatest toneworks of the immortal Beethoven, his Symphony in A, is to be performed by the Musikgesellschaft under conduct of the gifted composer Richard Wagner from Dresden. If the whole construction of this work is in itself of a nature to impress even the less musically-cultured, its effect must indeed be potent when rehearsed with such high intelligence as it now has been, and executed with an energy never witnessed in Zurich before. For the name of Wagner—who, not only in his operas, but quite recently in his literary writings, has shewn himself a genius from whom the world may expect still more—was it reserved to combine the musical forces of Zurich in that rare harmony sufficient to give to Beethoven's creation a rendering worthy of it. To this rare man we have already to express our warmest thanks for his friendly willingness to prepare a triumph for the idea of true art in this our city too."

One rubs one's eyes, and asks oneself if one has not suddenly awoken at Bayreuth and the end of the century. Nor is the report that follows the concert one whit less eloquent of the extraordinary fascination of Wagner's magnetic presence, of its power to quicken the senses alike of performers and bystanders. Here Spyri remarks:—*

"The crown of the concert was Beethoven's Symphony in A, for a worthy execution whereof the orchestra had been augmented, and Herr Kapellmeister Richard Wagner invited to direct it. Laudable efforts, and richly rewarded; for it is no exaggeration to say that never, perhaps, has a symphony been performed here in so masterly a fashion. Such fire, precision, delicacy and shading of the finest orchestral detail, make criticism dumb: for the spirit of Beethoven himself swept through these tones, the copiousness of his ideas, the marvellous variety and depth of his emotions. Wagner—probably little more than a name to our public hitherto,† the heroic proportions

* Or is it young Baumgartner, writing a professional review for the editor? In either case the credit of Spyri remains the same, for publishing it.

† Wagner must therefore have been misinformed when he wrote last August, in his first letter to Uhlig from Zurich: "To my immense surprise I

of his operas making their performance no easy task for a minor stage —this evening must have won that public's highest regard ; for it is not sufficient to be a practised and alert conductor, but it also needs a man of genius and creative power himself, to be able thus to render Beethoven with an orchestra consisting largely of amateurs and none too accustomed, in its corporate capacity, to such difficult classical pieces. Precisely to the astonishing pliancy of this orchestra, and the visible delight with which it followed the master's hints, distinguished acknowledgment is therefore due."

Through their entire freedom from hysterics, there is history in every line of these two extracts ; but one touch of history is a little startling to us at this early date : for the first ascertainable time is Richard Wagner publicly styled by a title generally reserved for composers of undisputed celebrity—"the master." Spyri constantly uses it hereafter, and we thus have evidence as striking as that of Hans v. Bülow of the reverence with which "the master" was already regarded by those members of the younger generation who came into familiar intercourse with him. They all were fire and flame for him, each in his special department : not only the young lions of the pen, but the manipulators of the bow or ventil. How else could he have got a rendering such as that described, from so exiguous a band? It consisted of no more than 25 to 30 professional bandsmen, engaged as chance willed for the winter, to whom were added for this special item about a dozen amateurs and volunteering artists.* Moreover, the concert-committee itself seems to have formed a far

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have found that I am famous here, and through the pianoforte editions of all my operas, whole acts of which have repeatedly been performed here at concerts and vocal clubs." On the contrary, Dec. '51 he writes : "Can't you wake Meser up again? The man is really *too* negligent of his business. Baumgartner, who wanted the Sailors' Chorus from the Holländer (as arranged by me for men's voices alone) for his vocal union, has repeatedly ordered it through Hug's music-shop ; Meser doesn't stir ! And so it has gone on with him all along." Moreover, when we come to the Zurich performance of the *Tannhäuser* overture in '52, we read in the *Eidg. Ztg.*, "For the first time have we had the pleasure of hearing a tonework of this master's."—See, however, the middle of p. 18 *supra*.

* Herr A. Steiner reproduces the programme of this concert, as follows :— Part I. 1) Rossini's overture to *Tell ;* 2) cavatina for soprano from Verdi's *Attila*, Frl. Josephine Morra ; 3) barytone songs by Kücken, "Lore-Ley," "Maurisches Ständchen," sung by Herr Roth of the Zurich Opera ; 4) introd.

juster estimate of Wagner's artistic standing, than any similar body elsewhere. According to Steiner, who derives his information from surviving members, the handing of a fee to Wagner was always a most ceremonial proceeding, carried out by a deputation bearing a letter of politest thanks; at the first sitting to discuss the point, indeed, a question was seriously raised as to whether one could presume to offer so great an artist a monetary grant at all! Perhaps they concluded that the smaller the offering, the less the affront; for, whatever the exact amount may have been, we know from a letter to Liszt that it was not large. But on the conductor's side the task had been undertaken purely out of love for art.

After the concert of January 1850, Wagner did not appear in the Zurich Casino for another twelve months. Leaving for his fruitless expedition to Paris almost immediately, he remained away, as we have seen, until July; whereas the autumn and early winter of that year found him busy at the theatre. Still, we hear of fortnightly musical evenings at the house of an amateur clarinetist Ott-Imhof (chairman of the concert-committee), at one of which the hornist Baer remembers to have played in Beethoven's Septet under Wagner's beat—whether this winter or next, is not recorded.

The concerts of the Zurich 'Panharmonic' at which Wagner assisted early in 1851 were three in number. Jan. 28 he conducted Weber's *Euryanthe* overture and Beethoven's symphony in C minor; Feb. 25, Spontini's overture to the *Vestale* and Beethoven's *Eroica*, for which latter he wrote the "explanatory programme" so often reprinted (see *P.* III. 221-4). The fundamental idea of this "programme" is already contained in the

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and variations for guitarre by Vois, Frl. J. Morra (same as vocalist?); 5) recitative and aria from Mozart's *Figaro*, "O, säume länger nicht" (*Deh vieni, non tardar*), Frl. Corrodi. Part II. 6) "Symphony in A major, No. 7, by L. van Beethoven, with augmented orchestra under the direction of Herr Kapellmeister Richard Wagner from Dresden"; 7) "Jamais, jamais," by Ciccarelli, and "Rataplan: chanson de Mme Malibran," sung by Frl. Morra; 8) Adagio and Polonaise for horn by Körnlein, played by Herr Schrenk, a member of the orchestra; 9) duet for two sopranos from Donizetti's *Maria Padilla*, Frl. Corrodi and Frl. Morra.—Wagner, of course, conducted nothing but the symphony. The concert began at 6 P.M.; tickets 1 gulden.

Happy Evening of ten years ago: "Where, in what part of this symphony do you find the faintest indication that the composer had his eye on a specific event in the heroic career of Bonaparte? . . . At the moment of creative inspiration it is no longer the outward event that governs the composer, but the musical impression it has begotten in him. . . . I am happy enough to admire in it nothing but a gigantic monument of Art, to fortify myself by the strength and joyous exaltation which swell my breast on hearing it; and leave to learned other folk to spell out the fights of Rivoli and Marengo from its score's mysterious hieroglyphs" (*P.* VII. 79-80). Young Bülow—who had previously played two salon-pieces by Kullak and Liszt to the Zurich public Nov. 12, 1850—came over from S. Gallen to play Liszt's phenomenally difficult pianoforte arrangement of the *Tannhäuser* overture; thus giving the Swiss a foretaste of the conductor's own music. And Bülow reports to his father: "Wagner worked wonders with the *Eroica*. Incredible! Nowhere have I heard the symphony like that. Majestic and entrancing"; and that with a patched-up orchestra of under 50.

These two subscription-concerts were succeeded on the 18th of March, '51, by an extra concert for the benefit of the professional members of the orchestra, when Wagner gave his services with Weber's Jubilee-overture and a repetition of Beethoven's Symphony in A. However exacting in the cause of art, he was a prime favourite with his bandsmen throughout his life, and on this occasion they publicly expressed their thanks in the columns of the *Eidg. Ztg* (March 22). Horn-player Baer, already mentioned, declares that one and all would have gone through fire for him, and never grumbled at the length of his rehearsals. Even with his reproofs he had the knack of mingling a spice of humour bound to win their hearts: for instance, "Gentlemen, you have just afforded me a great delight. You have played exactly as wrongly as the Dresden orchestra." To the bandsman as an individual he was kindness itself, never forgetting the hardship of his ill-paid lot. Thus he had written Uhlig in September 1850: "Tell me at once if you know of a few poor devils in Dresden whom God, in righteous wrath against the human race, has made players on stringed instruments; and who—to stave off that wrath for a winter—would come here for 5 to 6 months," etc.

So long ago as January 1850 he had tried to get the Zurich orchestra permanently increased to a strength becoming so well-to-do a city. In September he was agitating for a special fund to be applied to the purpose: his agitation met deaf ears. After the winter season of 1850-51, when his achievements alike at the Opera and in the concert-room had made those ears a little keener, he published his pamphlet *A Theatre at Zurich* (p. 149 *ant.*). Its broader proposals remained without fruit, but something—however little—must have been done toward improving the band; for, just after his return from Albisbrunn, he writes Uhlig (Dec. '51), "The local orchestra is quite well set up this winter: the theatrical conductor [Schöneck], a young man aged 22, is capital—has fire and precision. I have been invited to conduct three symphonies again: I choose the Eighth, the Pastoral and C minor. For the rest, I hold aloof from everything: my disgust has become greater and greater: I'm living only for my health and my dramatic scheme." Evidently he was not to be tempted into a second experiment with the existing Zurich theatre; but its orchestra was the same as that of the concerts, and therein resides a plausible explanation of the "disgust." Abt is not mentioned in this letter—at least, not in its published form *—but Steiner informs us that this very second-rate composer had taken so much umbrage at the interest in Richard Wagner displayed by the public and the amateur bandsmen last winter, "whereas he himself had found so little," that he threatened to resign his engagement with the Zurich 'Panharmonic,' and only withdrew the threat when he saw that it was likely to be seriously acted on. It was Reissiger over again, save that Abt was more than six years Wagner's junior, and consequently there is less excuse for his jealousy. Foolish man, not to have profited by the chance of a free lesson.

At the last three of the six subscription-concerts of the winter 1851-2, then, had Wagner consented to appear. But that was for the benefit of Zurich, not himself: the fee was scarcely worth considering, and his spurs as conductor had long been won. If

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* It continues with "Apropos! Baumgartner has just brought out some songs," which Wagner wishes Uhlig to puff. In his own article on those songs, a few weeks later, he makes Abt the unnamed foil; so the "apropos" is not without a meaning. Next autumn (1852) Abt is called to an appointment at the Court of Brunswick, thus relieving Zurich of the main obstructionist.

his great dramatic project were ever to be realised in Switzerland, he must pave the way for it by samples of his music, in the first place; and that required an orchestra far better than "quite good," since notes and style were altogether new to Swiss bandsmen. So he suddenly conceives the idea of getting up a little musical festival of his own, for next summer. Ten days after the letter last-cited, he writes again to Uhlig: "I have a happy thought. I would give my life to hear the prelude to my Lohengrin well performed by an orchestra, for once in a way. To attain that end I must beat about the bush, and have determined on the following plan. At the end of June the local theatre closes: for the first week of July I engage its orchestra for a week of rehearsals; for the same period I engage (or merely invite) the best bandsmen from Berne, Basle, S. Gallen, etc.—thus mustering a good orchestra of 20 to 24 violins and so forth. The parts I send to be studied in advance.—With this orchestra, and a chorus selected from the best voices here, I then rehearse morning and evening for a whole week, and give (sc. repeat) the following programme on two successive evenings." There is no need to discuss that programme now; consisting of excerpts from the *Dutchman*, *Tannhäuser*, and *Lohengrin*, it is substantially the same as that actually given in the summer *after* next. "This programme thoroughly pleases me. Of course you catch its drift? It is the musical illustration of my preface to the 3 opera-poems [*Comm.*], which I take as read beforehand by all concerned with me. In the concert-bill I shall not scruple to set forth in plain language whatever is needful to an understanding, but shall print the following notice at its head:—If I wished to present myself complete—as dramatist—I could do so in none but an imperfect guise at present: I therefore shew myself but incompletely, only on *one* side of my nature, at least not to appear in rags and tatters [lit. "unclearly and with gaps"]. If you want to have the *whole* of me, then do your share to make it possible." It would have been a bad opening for a concert-programme, by far too stilted; but two things it makes plain to us: first, that its author insists on his right to the title of dramatist, not merely of opera-composer; second, that a considerable section of the Zurich public had already acquired exceptional esteem for him—never would he have ventured to address the Dresdeners like that.

Local judges (who?) had assured him that the costs of such an undertaking could easily be met by increased prices—so this letter of Dec. 13 says. For the next four weeks he is full of the scheme, writing on New Year's day 1852, for instance, "I think I shall have the parts for my concert copied out in Dresden." By January 12, however, this bubble has burst in the "balmy atmosphere" of Zurich: "I'm stranded once more, with all my wishes, hopes and plans. Intolerably clearly do I see that everything with me must stay unsatisfied and useless. Alas! alas!—wherever I knock I must recognise at once the barren grey impossibility of all my proposals. . . . Everybody I approach hangs his head, sighs, is mute, and relapses from that effort to his old state of leather. . . . I'm tortured with the horrible remorse of having ever counted upon anything outside me. So I am gnawing at myself again, devouring myself till the appeasement of my hunger shall have consumed me all away! In truth I have been devouring myself for long: when I look back on my life, I am bound to say that little nutriment has been furnished from without to so needy a heart as mine. Never for a moment have things been made smooth for me: nothing but angles for me to stumble against, nothing but spikes for me to tread on! And now, for my refreshment—I do not say for my reward (for here is nothing to reward)—no! simply to give me another opportunity of letting *others* feed upon me—which, again, can be my only cordial!—I wished for nothing more than—." Here the sentence breaks off with an exclamation, and the letter is evidently thrown aside in a rage. After a big dash, it starts again: "Nothing will come of my concert. I've given it up. All ulterior intentions, which I had associated with it, have been nullified in advance through the leather of my friends. If my first idea of that concert was inspired by the wish to hear the prelude to Lohengrin for once, I renounce the luxurious apparatus for attaining that wish. Strange, that I should be in similar case to Beethoven: he could not hear his music because he was *deaf* (anything else could never have hindered *him*); I can't hear mine because I'm worse than deaf, because I don't live in my age at all, because I flit among you as a ghost, because the wide world is full of fools! . . . Ah, if I were not to rise from my bed to-morrow; if I had to wake no more to this odious life! . . . Tell me, is it not unmanly of me, to pour forth such complaints?

. . Never mind: they all shall know—all who can rejoice over my works, i.e. over my *living* and doing—that they are rejoicing over my *griefs*, over my *greatest unhappiness!*"

Some more than ordinary disillusion must have fallen to his lot, some flat refusal that cut away all present ground on which to build the airy castle of a *Nibelungen* festival; for the mood is still upon him after eighteen days have passed, notwithstanding the success of his Beethoven concert in the interval. "I do not reckon on the performance of my Nibelungen dramas in my life-time," he writes to Liszt (p. 261 *antea*). "If I now turn my thoughts to my great work, it really is for nothing but to seek salvation from my misery, oblivion of my life. I have nothing else before me, and happy shall I count myself when I no longer know that I exist."—That was the mood in which the character of Siegmund was forming in its author's brain. Its cause? Ill health, no doubt, had its share, reaction from the grip of that abominable cold-water cure. But there was more than that: perhaps some under-current of intrigue, to contend with; at any-rate "the leather of my friends." These worthy Zurichers were not to be spurred on to a far-reaching adventure. Heads were shaken even at the idea of an exclusively Wagnerian concert; and, granting the possibility of a guarantee for that*—we may imagine them arguing—the "ulterior intentions" are simply insane. How can we blame them? Wagner indeed was "not living in his age," and it was only step by step that he could hope to carry it along with, or rather, drag it after him. Yet the pulse of genius beats so fast, that it takes no account of the clock, and grows impatient with the slow-paced common mortal. It is precisely the same with the inventor of most of the appliances in use in daily life: *he* can see their whole future advantage to everyone; but the ordinary "practical" man shakes his head till the invention has fought its way to the front, and perhaps left its author a wreck. To his earliest mention of his recent scheme Wagner had added: "In any case it cannot come about if my friends sit timorously brooding over interest and compound

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* Acquaintance with Otto Wesendonck, who became a guarantor for the eventual Wagner-concert in 1853, can scarcely have begun till toward the end of February 1852, i.e. subsequently to the compulsory abandonment of the original scheme.

interest. For once in a way a little hard capital must certainly be risked.—Enough of that, for to-day!—But it's bad, if I let my whole soul go forth, and get nothing but Hm! hm! for answer" (to U., Dec. 13, '51). No capitalist had appeared, from any quarter;* so the "luxurious apparatus" for a hearing of the *Lohengrin* prelude has to be abandoned after a month of semi-illusions.

Yet, a little more sanguineness on the part of his friends would have been amply justified. On the bill of the Zurich Panharmonic's concert Jan. 20, 1852, there appears a notice, prosaic enough in itself, but proving that the name of Wagner had already become a house-filler: "Honoured concert-visitors are requested to place no chairs in the gangway, and are reminded that the benches are reckoned to seat five persons each, if circumstances demand. . . . In case of need, the committee will see that extra chairs are provided, which are only to be placed in the area before the orchestra and in the side-hall; moreover, it will prevent overcrowding by due limitation of the issue of tickets." For all its official baldness, that is more reliable evidence of popularity than any newspaper report that "the hall was packed." And it was for Wagner's first reappearance this winter.

Though his own pet scheme had succumbed to his friends' "Hm! hm!"—he had promised to conduct three symphonies of Beethoven's at the regular winter-concerts, and he more than kept his word. For the 20th of January he chose not only Beethoven's Eighth, but the whole of that master's *Egmont* music. A faint idea of the care with which he invariably approached such a task may be derived from a casual remark to Uhlig: "I got the oboist to my room, and coached him in the Egmont entr'acte as if he were a prima donna; the man was beside himself with joy at the result." His preparations for this concert are also recorded by a certain Dr Hermann

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* Possibly hopes had been built on the Ritters, of whom Karl had returned to Dresden for Christmas; Karl, whom I have already supposed to be a partner in the "old uncle" idea of September 1850 (p. 226 *antea*). The letters to Uhlig of the beginning of 1852 certainly betray a little irritation on Wagner's part as regards his benefactress; but it soon passed away when he reflected on her continuous kindness to his private self, for he writes Feb. 26, "Best wishes to the Ritters. Let them have no fear: they won't lose *me*." —W. A. E.

Rollet, whom we shall meet in person next chapter: "I attended not only the performance of the Egmont-music and a symphony of Beethoven's, but almost all the rehearsals—as also of the *Flying Dutchman* in April. It was positively amazing, how Wagner put life into everybody, individually and collectively; the magnificent swing he gave the work, from beginning to end; the indefatigable power wherewith his baton now compelled, now laid the storm. Hands, feet, his whole body, were brought into the most animated play; and one saw that it was a sacred-flaming earnestness with him at every moment, from the first bar to the last" (*Neue freie Presse*, March 1883). Herwegh, a non-musician too, was just as much impressed as Bakunin had been by the Ninth at Dresden, and declared the rendering "absolutely divine." As for the *Eidgenössische*, it came out on January 22 with the following (by Spyri or Baumgartner?):—

After a succession of most indifferent concerts, with small exception [poor Abt!], last Tuesday we again were given one that made an epoch and can scarcely be ever forgotten in Zurich. Beethoven's music to Goethe's *Egmont* and the same master's Eighth Symphony were performed under Richard Wagner's direction. The first is perhaps the profoundest dramatic music ever penned . . . and truly electrifying was the effect it produced. But who will deny that it was Wagner alone—Wagner who understands the genius of Beethoven as few besides him; Wagner, familiar as poet with every emotion of the human heart, and gifted with rare subtlety of musical feeling—that it was he alone who breathed spirit and life into this tone-picture, which must remain a closed book in uninitiate hands? . . . It was he who drew from far and near the excellent material of his band, and formed of it a whole that joyfully obeyed the master's magical control. With such fire, such enthusiasm, such certainty and precision, our bandsmen never played before. We feel bound to offer the noble master this full and loud acknowledgment, which all musicians pay to him,* neither did the unusually numerous audience withhold. Honour to whom honour is due! Thanks, therefore, to the Musikgesellschaft which induced Herr Wagner to co-operate in this and two concerts to come.

* Footnote to the above in the *Eid. Ztg*:—"One such of proved reputation, who had just returned from a tour through the great art-cities of Germany, assured us that he had heard large orchestras in many a place, but nowhere a reproduction so glowing with life." That unnamed musician must have belonged to the younger generation, unless, indeed, it was the 'cellist Böhm.

The two vocal pieces in the *Egmont* music, "Die Trommel gerührt" and "Freudvoll und leidvoll," were sung by Frau Rauch-Wernau, whom we met in Chapter II.; a "connecting poem" by Mosengeil was recited by a Herr Heusser. With that and the Eighth Symphony we might have thought the programme full enough; but the fashion of the day tended to length and variety, and a violoncello fantasia on "Weber's last thought" (Leopold Böhm), a soprano and a barytone solo with orchestral accompaniment (Frau Rauch-Wernau and Herr Pichon), were wedged between.* Concerning such padding, Spyri justly remarks: "We really fail to understand why these numbers were not spared the public and the artists, who must have found them a most ungrateful task. When one asks for an artistic feast, is it necessary that it should last three hours to the minute?" An echo of Wagner's own recurrent cry, which we shall hear at its loudest some three years later (anent the interminable programmes of the London Philharmonic). Not only the length of the traditional programme does Wagner object to, but its horrible agglomeration also. Between his first and second concerts of this season he writes: "Were Beethoven's tone-poems really understood by the public, i.e. according to their poetic subject, how were it possible to set a modern concert-programme before it? How were it possible to offer an audience in one breath a Beethoven symphony and compositions of the most pronounced inanity?" We shall have to return to this notable letter (No. 55 to Uhlig) in connection with one or two minor literary efforts of about the same date, but already must assay it for the secret of Wagner's "magical" conducting:—

"Since the Ninth Symphony in Dresden I have never approached the rendering of a composition by Beethoven without endeavouring to bring about an understanding of it in somewhat similar fashion. And the effect of my procedure has always been most striking upon the executants themselves. The commonest dance-musicians I have qualified, here in Zurich, for achievements whereof neither they nor the audience had dreamt before.

* The concert-bill, in announcing the *Egmont*-music and Symphony as "under the direction of Herr Richard Wagner," gives us none but negative information as to who conducted these intrusive items. Abt, of course, would disdain to play such a minor rôle; consequently it must have been entrusted to the first violin, Konzertmeister W. Heisterhagen, a pupil of Spohr's.

In the *Eroica*, for instance, the effect of understanding it was great, particularly on the bandsmen." For that symphony, as we saw a year ago, he had circulated an explanatory programme following much the same lines as that for the Ninth in Dresden; "But my chief explanations are given by word of mouth at the rehearsals, at the respective passages themselves." There lay the secret: in those sudden shafts of illumination rained on the poetic structure of the work by a master of elective affinity, throwing the whole edifice into the highest relief. And there was no one to fix the fleeting image for all time! Not one member of the band, not one of the musical friends admitted to these rehearsals, seems to have been far-sighted enough to jot down those verbal explanations on the spot, as Porges did hereafter with the *Ring* and *Parsifal* at Bayreuth! Such a record would have been priceless at the present day, when it is universally admitted that no one ever "understood" a Beethoven symphony with the same intuitive rapport as Richard Wagner. And the Zurichers had him at the zenith of his interpretant power, every nerve vibrating with an inspiration at blood-heat from the genesis of his own titanic work, every muscle tense with the determination to conquer untold difficulties. To them he gave ungrudgingly of his best, no matter at what physical cost to himself, to make good their insufficient means: "The day before yesterday I conducted the Egmont-music and Eighth symphony. The performance — don't laugh, for I know what I am saying—was excellent. Only I suffered much from the great strain on my nerves" (to U., Jan. 20). That was the "egoist's" revenge on a society too timorous to guarantee the expense of a special concert to reveal him as composer.—

The programme of the subscription-concert on the 17th February was a shade better arranged than its forerunner; the two Beethoven numbers were reserved for its close, the whole of the second part being devoted to the C minor symphony, and the end of the first part to the *Coriolanus* overture. The good Zurichers could not do without their virtuoso-fantasia for a solo instrument (the violin this time), and a concerto by brummagem Kalkbrenner—Wagner's friend Alexander Müller at the pianoforte; but at least they soared to Mendelssohn and Spohr for the two vocal numbers that helped to make up the preliminary

matter. It was no direct concern of Wagner's,* however, for all he had consented to conduct was Beethoven, at present; though he appears to have been contemplating Mozart in the future, since he remarks to Uhlig on the 26th: "I have procured myself four of the Mozart symphonies; those I meant to perform in Dresden by degrees. So, the D major too." This from the supposed despiser of Mozart!—a curious reminiscence of the plans that had occupied his latter days in Saxony. But with Beethoven he had his hands full enough for the moment, to obtain such effects from the third-rate Zurich orchestra: "Yesterday evening I had another rehearsal of the C minor symphony" —he tells Uhlig on the 15th—"I think its execution would not have left you cold; at least it was far better than the Dresden performance, where my respect for you lofty Royal Chamber-musicians made me gulp down the best of what might have been to say. I only wish you could hear the violoncello theme of the second movement played here, and compare it with the wood-and-leather of your famous players by the card!"

This concert brings another contribution to that "explanatory" branch of musical literature on which Wagner stands unrivalled, the absolute antithesis to the eye-teasing analytical programme. "I am publishing an explanation of the Coriolanus-overture for the coming performance here," he informs Uhlig early in February. At least a fortnight before this undistinguished concert, then, he has been bending all his strength to his task for sheer love of an immortal master, "consuming himself for others." With Beethoven's music on one side of his brain, Shakespeare's drama on the other, we may figure him poring over the subject till he has solved its riddle by his own artistic insight: What was in Beethoven's mind when he chose Coriolanus for the hero of a tone-poem? "For myself, I now am positive that I have understood Beethoven only from the time when I lit on the track of the poetic subject of what he carried out in tone: the *Coriolanus* proves it to me plainly. I maintain that people who have heretofore performed the genuine Beethoven, have merely parroted the outward sound of a language they

* As on the previous occasion, the Beethoven numbers alone are announced as "Unter Leitung des Herrn Richard Wagner." It will be noticed that the "Kapellmeister from Dresden" is omitted now—perhaps also last season. On the concert-bill of January 1850 it can scarcely have appeared with his permission, as he never had a fondness for ceremonial titles, and most certainly would have objected to being styled by one no longer his.

understood as little as you may understand euphonious Greek verse declaimed to you: you revel in the sound, now soft, now strong, now grave, now acute, but do not understand the *sense* imparted to you" (to U., Feb. 26). It was the poetic *sense* of these sounds, as a whole, that had remained to be decyphered from the "mysterious hieroglyphs" of Beethoven: "I don't mind saying that whoever will carefully follow my elucidation of this subject, step by step, must admit that without it he had never understood this incomparably plastic work of tone at all; unless, that is, from the general designation 'overture to Coriolanus' he had already succeeded in feeling out for himself the selfsame scene as I have" (to U., Feb. 15).

The "explanation" itself is too well known to need review; yet there is one passage in it that calls for emphasis. Wagner has asked himself: What in the story of Coriolanus would appeal to a true *tone*-poet? And this is his answer: "From all this great political canvas, so rich in matter for the poet, but quite forbidden to the musician—who can express moods, feelings, passions and their opposites, but no sort of political [sc. historical] relations—Beethoven seized for portrayal one single scene, the most decisive of them all, the true purely-human emotional core of the whole wide-stretching subject: the scene between Coriolanus, his mother, and his wife, in the camp before the gates of his native city." That scene is reconstituted by Wagner in a psychologic synthesis as vivid and convincing as the "programmes" by which he interprets his own overtures. But the point on which stress should be laid, is the principle enunciated above. We have met it before in *Opera and Drama;* we shall meet it again in the letter on Liszt's Symphonic poems (1857): to this extent alone will he admit the claim of "programme-music"—that it shall deal with human moods, impressions or passions, such as can be embraced within a simple scene, not attempt to paint the complex details of history, romance or natural surroundings.*

* About this time, certainly within the next three or four months, he recasts young Bülow's "programme" for an overture:—At the end of January, having recently had his overture to *Julius Cæsar* performed at Weimar under Liszt, Hans writes his father, "I am setting about an overture to 'Romeo and Juliet,' the musical-philosophic plan of which is already completed"; but at the end of July his father is told, "Besides my songs I am already sketching my overture to 'Romeo and Juliet'; my first plan of it was too philosophic-abstract, and has been much amended for me by Richard Wagner."

So great assistance did the bandsmen find this graphic sketch of the *Coriolanus*, that at the first rehearsal for the next concert they begged a similar explanation of the *Tannhäuser* overture, "to enable them to play better." They were not so supercilious as the bigwigs at the Gewandhaus (1846), to whom it had been an act of condescension to play the thing at all. But how do we come to have this solitary instalment from a comprehensive scheme of excerpts that had lately been abandoned in despair? It was Herwegh's doing; or rather, it was done at Herwegh's instigation.

"Herwegh is plaguing me for a performance of the Tannhäuser-overture," writes Wagner even before the second concert; "I will see if it be possible [i.e. with such a band], but have my doubts still." Again, "Herwegh—perhaps the only man to whom I have been able to make myself intelligible to the point of fullest sympathy—unceasingly begged me to perform the Tannhäuser overture for him; *for his sake* I conquered my dislike of this undertaking, and put forth all my strength to overcome its difficulties." They were difficulties indeed, after his recent experience, for it was impossible to think of a *Tannhäuser* overture without a far larger body of strings etc. than the Zurich musical society had hitherto mustered for him. However, the success of the February concert clinched the matter: "The Musikgesellschaft lets me have the best violins etc. from Basle, Aarau, Schaffhausen and so on [especially Winterthur], almost all of them German bandmasters. I shall have 18-20 violins, 6 violas and 5 violoncelli, among them even a great virtuoso, Böhm (from the Hechingen Kapelle). Moreover our own little orchestra has made remarkable progress: the wind—clarinets, oboes and horn, do their work quite admirably. . . . The explanation is ready: I enclose two copies (one for the Ritters). The performance is not till the 16th of March: in addition—the Pastoral symphony, as a good contrast" (to U. Feb. 26). To recoup themselves, the committee raised the price of tickets from one gulden to 3 francs,* thus making the first Swiss per-

* See the concert-bill reprinted, together with the two preceding, by Herr A. Steiner (*loc. cit.*). The first part of the programme included a concertino for 'cello, composed and played by Leopold Böhm, "royal Fürstenberg chamber-musician"; an aria sung by Rauch-Wernau; a flute-concerto; a quintet from Mozart's *Così fan tutte*—and the *Tannhäuser* overture. The

formance of a composition of Wagner's quite an occasion apart.

Wagner never did anything by halves, and must have devoted the best part of three weeks to rehearsing this concert. Visitors were admitted to the workshop. "Never shall I forget the first rehearsal of the *Tannhäuser* overture in the gloomy old Kaufhaus at Zurich"—writes Frau Mathilde Wesendonck * (*Allg. Mus. Ztg* 1896)—"It was a revelation: audience and bandsmen were electrified." In sober truth, the bandsmen were very much puzzled at first (according to the hornist Baer), especially by the Venusberg music, but gradually came so far under the spell of the conductor's magnetism that he could report to Uhlig on this first rehearsal, "Against all my expectation, it fell out very well"—which is saying a good deal, considering everything. A week later, sending Liszt a copy of the "explanation," he says, "I have reason to hope I shall bring about a right good rendering of this composition" (March 4).

As for the event itself, the following is the account rendered by the *Eidgenössische* of March 17:—

Yesterday's concert of the Musikgesellschaft formed a worthy copestone to the two preceding. Beethoven's delightful Pastoral Symphony was performed with the perfection usual under Richard Wagner's guidance. Beside it we for the first time had the joy of hearing a tonework by this master himself. It convinced everyone that Wagner is not only a distinguished conductor, but also an eminent composer.

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second part was occupied entirely by the Pastoral symphony. The wise arrangement of putting the Symphony last, adopted at all three concerts, may certainly be attributed to Wagner's suggestion; as also the significant notice, "When the Symphony begins, the lower door of the hall will be shut." He seems moreover to have succeeded in getting the customary length curtailed by half an hour, for *this* programme bears a special notice: "Begins at 6 in the evening; ends at 8.30." For the *Tannhäuser* overture a "reinforced orchestra" is announced.

* Thus furnishing the date of commencement of their friendship, since Wagner's letter to Uhlig of Feb. 26, '52, refers both to this first rehearsal and to "some new acquaintances" and so on (p. 272 *ant.*).—The Kaufhaus—built in 1620, once styled the Kornhaus, and recently pulled down—was situate on the Stadthaus quay in the "smaller town," adjoining the Münster bridge; here concert-rehearsals were generally held. The Casino, built in 1807 on the other side of the Limmat, in the "large town," lay close to Wagner's dwelling; its concert-hall came to be divided in the seventies into two courts of justice.

His music to *Tannhäuser* is thoroughly original, individual, of plastic characterisation and indomitable force. Its success was extraordinary. The whole audience, assembled to a number never seen here before, was stirred to its deepest by this powerful romance, and finally gave vent to its feelings in a protracted storm of enthusiastic cheers. Nothing but a glance at the orchestra, prostrated by its great exertions, could prevent the overture from being played all through again. . . . The three last concerts of this winter will never be forgotten in Zurich, and we wish them a glorious resurrection next year.

There is a ring of sincerity about these *Eidgenössische* reports that must be our excuse for reproducing them, especially as they may be said to constitute an actual part of Wagner's Swiss surroundings. Nothing like this frank enthusiasm had ever been allowed to find its way into a Dresden or a Leipzig journal. Zurich, however, was virgin soil: no musical coterie had yet thought it worth its while to cultivate. Set upon such a soil, the effect of the *Tannhäuser* overture was bound to be prodigious. Here was an epitome of the whole Wagnerian music, so far as it had yet advanced. Given an unprejudiced audience, if one wanted to propagandise for Wagner, the first work to leap to one's thought would be that overture. Yet its composer had had to be plagued by Herwegh before he would consent to venture it alone, and, despite the number of his female converts, he says himself: "It was with my eye continually on Herwegh, that I brought about a performance which ended by surprising and uncommonly delighting myself." The *Lohengrin* prelude he had wished to conduct for the sole purpose of hearing it himself: the *Tannhäuser* overture he conducts for the delectation of a single friend—exemplifying what he had just observed in the *Communication* about "addressing myself henceforth to individuals allied to me by community of feeling" (*P.* I. 328). We have heard of soloists who found it a great help to focus their performance on some chance person in the auditorium whose face wore a look of sympathy: the case was somewhat similar here, save that Wagner knew his man, and knew him not to be musical. With his "eye on" Herwegh, he seems to have inwardly said, You have asked for this music, and I'm determined you shall understand it. And that determination drew far more than Herwegh within the magic circle. Let us hear his own account of it:—

"Well, the performance of the Tannhäuser overture has taken place," he writes Uhlig four days after. "It surpassed my every expectation, for it really went quite splendidly. That you may judge best from the effect, which was downright *terrific*. I'm not speaking of the storm of applause it evoked there and then, but more especially of the symptoms that have since come gradually to my knowledge. In particular the women were turned inside out: emotion was so great with them, that it had to find relief in sobs and weeping. Even the rehearsals were sedulously attended, and remarkable are the accounts I have heard of the first impression, which mostly took the form of infinite sadness (*Wehmuth*): only after this had vented itself in tears, came a feeling of the highest, most overwhelming joy. To be sure, this effect was rendered possible only by my explanation of the poetic subject: nevertheless—much as I myself have been moved again by my own overture—I was astonished at first by the unusual potency of that effect. It was a woman, who solved me the riddle: people looked on me in the light of a Lent-preacher thundering against the sin of *hypocrisy* (*ich bin den Leuten als niederschmetternder Bussprediger gegen die Sünde der* Heuchelei *erschienen*).—After what I have achieved with it here, I have suddenly conceived a fancy for this work of mine: really I can recall no other tone-poem capable of exerting an equal influence on sanely-sensuous minds. But its place is in the concert-room. . . . I'm terribly fatigued once more; but don't call me vain if I confess that the wonderful effects I'm spreading round me, restore me now and then to a pleasurable sense of existence." Then follows that remark already quoted (p. 273) about "the moist eye of a woman," which we now may read in the light of the further remark that Herwegh was "probably the only *man*" to whom he had been able to make himself completely understood. Thus we have the beginning of what the Nietzschians so often have sneered at as Wagner's "feminine conventicle." Why it should be a subject for sneers, heaven only knows; but,—apart from Liszt and "Herwegh the unique"—it certainly is a fact that, had it not been for the *younger* male generation *and* the ladies, the exiled Wagner's art must have perished by the way, for want of the encouragement that comes from sympathy and faith—that "fabulous belief in me" which Wagner tells friend Liszt (Apr. 13) he is now experiencing in his surroundings.

It was a new phase in his career, this sensation suddenly created at Zurich, in a manner recalling the triumphs once reaped by Paganini and by Liszt himself in Paris and S. Petersburg—not to come to the virtuoso-adulation of our modern days. But what a difference in the tangible reward! The sober Swiss merchants were not the people to empty their "money-bags" at the feet of an artist: even in Paris, who but the stingy Paganini would have dreamt of enriching an eccentric composer-conductor? Yet for half-a-crown a head they had been given what a thousand pounds could never have purchased. It is ludicrous, that they would have had to pay more for a bottle of fairly choice wine than for a ticket admitting them to the whole series of three "never to be forgotten" concerts; whilst the provider of the feast received a monetary fee scarcely sufficient to defray the upkeep of the private establishment of many an applauder for a single day! To speak plainly, they were *robbing* the artist, when they regaled themselves at the expense of one they knew to have come among them penniless; put another way, they rioted on the charity of Frau Ritter of Dresden.* Had Wagner literally been a "preacher," how quickly would a cosy, perhaps a sumptuous chapel have been built, in which to hear more of his "thunderings"; but he was only a being from another world than theirs, supposed to live on fame and air, and the bulk of his congregation never dreamt of putting its hand in its pocket to build him a tabernacle for his works, or even to provide him with a stipend. If the ladies had had the keeping of the Zurich purse, things might have been otherwise; but that is always the weak point of a "feminine conventicle," and in course of the next few weeks we shall find that he has actually to pay hard cash himself for furnishing his enthusiastic admirers with a taste of one of his earlier operas. Not that Zurich was closer-fisted than most other towns; but it had a greater opportunity, of vindicating the Federal character: an opportunity of constituting itself the chief musico-dramatic centre of Europe through a handsome *public* subscription in honour of a genius it had publicly acknowledged.

* Intimate friends such as Sulzer, by no means *rich*, of course must be excepted. It is the wealthy Swiss traders to whom we refer; for the Wesendoncks were *German*.

While Wagner is taking a rest after the immense fatigue of "making the impossible possible," as he further describes his achievement with the *Tannhäuser* overture at Zurich, let us inquire what was really meant by that oracular saying, "a sermon against hypocrisy." Since we cannot revive the definite impressions he appears to have burnt into the brains of his hearers by the fire of a phenomenal rendering of the work, we must take refuge in the "explanatory programme" above referred to. On the printed leaflets for the concert of March 16, 1852, it was prefaced with the following note:—

"Friends of my art who desire an exacter understanding of this tonework of mine I must refer to my poem 'Tannhäuser und der Sängerkrieg auf der Wartburg' itself, recently published by me through the book-trade as a part of my 'Three Opera-poems.' I cannot but hold it expedient, however, to furnish them with the concentrated picture that forms the special subject of the overture, in outlines which I have expressly borrowed from my tone-poem for the present purpose. I therefore beg the hearers of my overture to stamp sharply on their minds beforehand the picture I give them here; for then alone can it be heard with proper understanding."

However haltingly expressed—and Wagner was seldom successful with a formal 'bow to the audience'—this exordium tells us something worth remembering. The explanation was "expressly" made for the work when performed *apart;* therefore it may possibly differ from the tendency of the drama itself. The German of the second sentence in the above being highly involved, I will reproduce it for the benefit of experts: "Dennoch muss ich es für zweckdienlich halten, wenn ich das verdichtete Bild, das der Ouvertüre als besonderer Gegenstand der Darstellung zu Grunde liegt, in den Zügen mittheile, die ich jetzt meiner Tondichtung zum Zwecke der vorliegenden Mittheilung eigens entnahm." Here the German student will particularly notice the words *besonderer*, *jetzt*, and *eigens*. Now let him turn to Wagner's letter of May 29 ('52) apropos of a musical festival which Liszt is getting up: "If you give the Tannhäuser overture, don't forget to attach to the programme the explanation I prepared last winter for the Zurich performance. I consider it indispensable, because it gives in brief a condensed picture of the poetic subject, which really is conceived quite differently in the overture from what is the case in the opera

itself. In this sense you are quite right to call this overture a work by itself."

It is strange that Wagner had never made the discovery before; but, for one thing, this was the first time he had ever conducted the overture as an independent composition. In his endeavour to make its meaning clear to band and audience, he pursued exactly the same path as he had taken with the aforesaid works of Beethoven: waiving all preconceived notions, he searched the music till he felt out for himself its "poetic subject." And here he must have found a startling contrast: the *Tannhäuser* drama ends in victory of the spiritual over the sensual—the *Tannhäuser* overture ends in their reconciliation, i.e. in the restoration of the purified senses to their rights. Probably no more than subconscious at the time the overture was written, that, when he came to think it out, was the unmistakable drift of its music; and that was the gist of the present explanation, so outspokenly set forth that one wonders at its author's hardihood in making it his first personal art-message to a demure Swiss public. The lady who "solved the riddle" must have been considerably past her 'teens; but the ordinary critic is so convinced that Wagner's prose productions are nothing but sound and fury, signifying nothing, that he has passed without wincing this description of the overture's climax:—*

"As day drives back the night, and the Pilgrims' Chant draws nearer and yet nearer, that soughing of the breeze, which erewhile sounded as the shuddering cry of souls condemned, mounts also to ever gladder waves; and when the sun at last ascends in splendour . . . we recognise the jubilation of the Venusberg itself, redeemed from curse of impiousness, amid the sacred song. So wells and leaps each pulse of life in chorus of redemp-

* The Munich people were more squeamish. In November of this 1852 Wagner writes Uhlig: "I *must* tell you a joke about the Tannhäuser-overture. I had sent Lachner the programme, but received no answer: after reading about the performance ["very divided approval"] I reminded him. The reply was, that they had not—ventured to make it public, but had printed on their concert-programme a note to the following effect: 'Holy serenity of spirit! Nightfall.—Awaking of the passions.—The spirit fights against them.—Daybreak.—Final victory over matter—religious devotion. Song of jubilee.' Consequently they could assure me my composition had been thoroughly 'understood.' Isn't that delicious?"

tion; and both dissevered elements, soul and senses, God and Nature, embrace with the hallowing kiss of Love" (*P.* III. 230-1).

In the light of those words—feebly as even they convey the grandeur of the musical atonement—the *Tannhäuser* overture has become a masterpiece of the most daring order, throwing into the shade the whole drama it was originally meant to precede, much as Beethoven's *Leonora* overture shrivels the *Fidelio* libretto into insignificance; for Heinrich, Venus and Elisabeth, have all disappeared, and the individual is swallowed in the universal. "The concert-room is its place," writes Wagner, continuing his account of its effect at Zurich; "not before the opera at the theatre. There, if I had my way, I would let nothing but the first tempo of the overture be performed: the rest—in the fortunate event of its being understood—is too much, before the drama; in the opposite event, too little." We all know how he ultimately cut it in half (1860-1), so to speak, reserving its climax for the drama's close; and it is significant that in the scheme for his own particular Zurich concert he places the overture at the end of the *Tannhäuser* section, not at the beginning.

In this new interpretation we may trace several kindred influences at work: first, and most pronouncedly, that of the closing scene of his *Young Siegfried;* then, that of "my new friend, the English poet Shelley" (to U., Jan. 22); and finally, of the instigator of the performance, Herwegh the "bard of love." Yet in the heart of it there lurks a tendency of quite an opposite nature. "Had we life, we had no more need of art," is a sentence written but a month before; the letter enclosing to Uhlig the first proofs of the programme concludes with "I am thinking daily of my death"; and right in the middle of this explanation we get an unexpected foretaste of quite another system of philosophy than that of the glorifiers of the senses: "Love's goddess bears Tannhäuser with her to approachless distance, to the realm of Being-no-more." *Nicht-mehrsein*—a perfect equivalent for Nirvana; the state desired by Tristan and Isolde. Possibly suggested by the old-German representation of Holda (Venus*) as empress of the dead, it

* See vol. ii, 98.

is a psychological touch of the profoundest truth, preparing us for Wotan's descent to Erda to gather knowledge of "the end."

From Nirvana to the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* may seem a far cry, but we must borrow the Nibelung's tarnhelm.

Franz Brendel—whose former courageous attitude with regard to the *Judaism* question had earned him the playful epithet of "Martyr of Truth"*—was in reality most undecided in his comprehension of the new art-movement, to which he rather wished to be a convert, than actually was. Somewhat of a trimmer at heart, his editorial character perhaps is best summed up in the nickname by which he soon became known among the young Weimar bloods, namely "Aunt" Brendel. However, he had recently determined to give a fresh complexion to the *Neue Zeitschrift* by openly proclaiming it an organ of musical Progress, and for some weeks past had been bothering Wagner to bestow his blessing on the new departure in the form of an article. So at last, in the interval between his first and second Zurich concerts of 1852, Wagner reluctantly takes up the essayist's pen again, and signs on January 25 an open letter "On Musical Criticism" (pubd in the *N. Z.* Feb. 6). This title must be taken in the broadest sense; for, far from being a mere philippic against the laches of the common herd of musical reporters, the article's main object is to solve the problem, How should a musical journal be conducted, so as to help extricate music from its conventional rut? "Every fresh appearance of a musical paper has hitherto roused me either to anger or derision. The new-won possibility of taking the old scribble about music and over-scribbling it; then the disgustingly commercial character, which ultimately turned from music to discuss mere music-wares and music-thrummers, till it arrived at music-making wheels and cylinders—all this revealed to me the utter Byzantinism to which our musical affairs had sunk" (*P.* III. 67).

The remedy proposed by Wagner is characteristic not only of his fundamental principle, but also of his fondness for the

* "Märtyrer der Wahrheit," alias "Blutzeuge der Wahrheit": evidently a sally of Uhlig's, implying that Brendel rather commiserated himself for having thus burnt his fingers. See Hans von Bülow's letter to Uhlig of Oct. 15, '51.

etymologic test: "Give Music the widest signification originally connoted by its name. . . . That people which invented the name, originally connoted by it not only *the arts of poetry and tone*, but all artistic manifestments of the inner man through the organ of ringing speech." Put into practice, then, war to the death was to be waged against "music as an absolute separate-art"—i.e. music composed with no other aim than to tickle the philistine ear, or entertain the scientific eye—and none of its products should be so much as mentioned in the ideal "journal for music," excepting either to encourage their trend toward genuine Music, as defined, or to expose them as warning examples of the opposite trend. When the journal had thus established an æsthetic footing of its own, it might nurse some reasonable hope of wooing the co-operation of the word-poet: "The poet can have nothing to do with us, till he has been weaned from the same repugnance against the unadulterated music-maker as we feel against the unadulterated literarian; and he will cherish that repugnance for just so long as he sees us lend a shadow of support to modern tone-jugglery. The first poet who stretches forth his hand to us, may be our demonstration that we have really left the ancient rut and freed ourselves entirely from our unproductive egoism" (*ibid.* p. 70). The union with the poet once accomplished, it must further be extended to that counterpart of "Music" in which the Athenians trained their youth, namely "*Gymnastic*, i.e. the epitome of all those arts that contribute to the most perfect expression through bodily show itself . . . the art of physical portrayal." Thus we are brought back to the theme of *The Art-work of the Future*,—unfortunately also to its phraseology: "To prepare that Artwork for the Life of the Future, must constitute the most reasonable occupation for the Artist of the Present," and so on—the last public gasp of a moribund Feuerbachism, yet notable inasmuch as it follows so closely on the invitation sent to Feuerbach himself a few weeks since (p. 271). Finally, when Art shall have entrenched itself in such a stronghold, the function of Criticism will be at end: "You then may close your Journal for Music; it dies because the Art-work lives" (cf. *Siegfried* act i, "Sie starb—doch Siegfried, der genas").

An admirable programme for a journal desirous of striking new paths of its own; but unhappily one all-determinant point is

overlooked. To carry it out, would necessitate the appointment of a genius as editor, with a well-disciplined staff of the highest talent as contributors. Who, save a born poet-musician, could be trusted authoritatively to expound the "poetic trend" in the musical works of others? It would have occupied the whole even of Wagner's time, to keep such an argosy afloat; and *he* can hold out little promise of collaboration, "because I feel the utmost need, just now, to turn my undivided attention to a purely artistic project of large dimensions" (the *Nibelungen* trilogy).*

The form which that collaboration might have taken, may be inferred from two other studies that fall within the next three weeks, the one complete and published at the time, the other an epistolary torso, but both most intimately allied with the advice just tendered to Brendel. The first of this pair of corollaries appeared in the *Eidgenössische Zeitung* of February 7, 1852. Ostensibly a review of certain songs by Wilhelm Baumgartner, an uncorrected proof of it was sent to Uhlig (Letter 54) with the following comment: "See what use you can make of it. I don't think my friendly relations with B. have biased me: anyhow, my remarks may be taken as applying rather to the genus itself than to this particular species, which, for that matter, is fairly innocent. I was more concerned to administer a box on the ears to that foolish young X. X. of here." The double X in this letter indisputably stands for Franz Abt, though Wagner allowed no personal feud to drag that composer's name itself into the forum. Abt's songs have met with their deserts, and gone the way of all things fashioned for ephemeral popularity; of the merits of Baumgartner's we are in no position to judge, though Herr Steiner informs us that his chorus "O mein Heimathland" is still much sung in Switzerland. The generalities of Wagner's article are well-nigh all that concerns us: "With a piece of verse that already has fully met the poet's aim as a literary product, its musical setting can naturally have none but an arbitrary, or at the best a merely general connection." The ordinary song-composer has baldly

* Within the next few weeks the letter *On Musical Criticism* was reprinted, together with that of a year ago to Liszt *On the Goethe-Foundation* (which had meanwhile appeared in the *Neue Zeitschrift* March 5, '52), as a pamphlet entitled "Two Letters by R. Wagner," pub. Bruno Hinze, Leipzig.

chosen the "arbitrary" line, and merely sought for verses to which he can repeat the same set melody a given number of times: "To become a successful composer in this genre, is as easy to-day as to become a tailor in good request." That is the snub for unspecified Abt. Baumgartner, on the contrary, is praised for a visible endeavour to break away from the fashionable jingle and make his music fit the verses' varying sense; but a still better way is proposed to him, namely to "seek out that poet who will leave nothing to the musician's caprice, but in his verse itself supply the living matter for invention of the needful melody." There we have the alliance of poet and musician foreshadowed in *Opera and Drama*, to which Wagner now gives practicable shape by suggesting that Baumgartner should in future combine with his friend and compatriot, the poet Gottfried Keller.*

A far more significant illustration of the type of "musical criticism" just advocated by Wagner in the *Neue Zeitschrift* is the uncompleted sketch that forms the main body of that Letter 55 to Uhlig (signed Feb. 15, '52) on which we have already had to draw anent the *Coriolanus* overture. Here we have a link between two periods so remote as that of the old Paris struggles and that of the future Tribschen repose; on the one hand the early contemplated Life of Beethoven (see vol. i, 381-2), on the other the accomplished essays on *Conducting* (1869) and *Beethoven* (1870). Indeed the two works last-mentioned may be said to lurk *in nuce* in this fragment, the origin of which is as characteristic as its contents. The immediately-preceding letter to Uhlig (first week of Feb. '52) had said: "Perhaps I shall write and sign a report of my own on the approaching performance of the Coriolanus-overture, probably accompanying it with a note to the effect that I consider this sort of personal account the only

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* Author of *Der grüne Heinrich*, *Die Leute von Sedwyla* etc., subsequently great favourites of Wagner's. Keller was at Heidelberg now, and did not return to Zurich till the end of '55; from Heidelberg he had written to Baumgartner expressing lively approval of the ideas embodied in *A Theatre at Zurich*, though he refused to endorse the ultimate conclusions of *The Art-work of the Future*.—It is singular, by the way, that the songs of Robert Franz are nowhere mentioned publicly by Wagner; but the minor article reviewed above is almost his only contribution to the criticism of vocal chamber-music, and it was not till November '52 that he made acquaintance with Franz' *Lieder* (see Letter 88 to Uhlig).

suitable one with works that pass beyond the purely-musical to the poetic realm, instead of the usual panegyrics on performances that must be quite indifferent to persons not present." It is an odd anticipation of the modern modest hint that one is open to an 'interview,' and certainly the opinion of men like Wagner, Liszt and Berlioz, on the works they conducted would be (and was) of far greater value than that of the non-executant and uncreative critic. But "I have given up the idea of reporting on the performance myself"—writes Wagner in this Letter 55; "It will be as well to hold my tongue a bit in the *Neue Zeitschrift* for the present." So he hands over his unfinished notes, for Uhlig to make what use of he can.* The insight they afford into their author's attitude not only toward Beethoven's, but toward instrumental music in general, and the side-light they throw on the talisman of his own conducting, must be our apology for devoting a little more space to them than to the finished writings dealt with in our last few pages. They begin as under:—

"Hitherto the conductor of tone-works such as Beethoven's has seldom even grasped the nature of his task. Manifestly, he ought to be the channel for their understanding by the laity; and if that is eventually to be accomplished only by a perfectly adequate performance, the first question is, how to bring such a performance about?—The characteristic of Beethoven's great[er] toneworks is this: that they are actual poems, seek to represent an actual subject. The obstacle to their understanding, however, lies in the difficulty of finding surely out the subject represented. Beethoven was filled with a subject, his most important tone-pictures owe their composition almost solely to the individuality of the subject engrossing his mind: so full of it was he, that to him it seemed superfluous to denote that subject otherwise than in those tone-pictures themselves." Unfortunately, "these tone-poems of Beethoven's have hitherto been set before the laity by none but absolute-musicians, who never understood the What, for which the How was merely an expression." Thus the conductor had no definite idea wherewith to inspire his band; "he

* In the autumn of 1852 Uhlig accordingly publishes in the *Neue Zeitschrift* a series of articles "On the poetic contents of Beethoven's tone-works," commencing with an introduction of his own (Sept. 24), followed by Wagner's Dresden programme of the Ninth Symphony and Zurich explanations of the *Eroica* and *Coriolanus*.

simply taught it to repeat after him musical phrases which he himself did not understand" (here comes the simile of the reciter of verses written in a foreign tongue, which practically are nonsense-verses to one who has not learnt it). "So long as no real poetic subject is expressed in it," Wagner proceeds, "the language of Tone may certainly be most easily intelligible, since there can be no question of a true understanding at all. But so soon as it is employed to express a poetic subject, this tone-speech becomes the least intelligible of languages if that subject be not at the same time denoted by other means of expression than those of absolute music.—Now, its poetic subject is to be divined from a tone-piece of Beethoven's only by another tone-poet himself; since Beethoven instinctively addressed himself to such alone, namely to a man of completely similar feelings, like education, eh! almost equal capability. Such a man alone can bring these tone-pieces to the understanding of the laity, and before all by plainly indicating the subject of the tone-poem alike to executants and audience; thus, by making good an involuntary error in the technique of the tone-poet, who omitted to supply that indication."

Here we may note the distinction between "tone-poet" and "absolute musician" or "purely-musical composer." It will suffice to note it, for the term requires no definition beyond that implied in the following passage: "That our conductors and composers have remained without any true understanding of those tone-creations—do they not prove it by what they continue to compose to-day, despite the example of Beethoven? Were our modern instrumental sloppery conceivable, had they really grasped the most essential thing in Beethoven's tone-poems? And this is, that Beethoven's greater tone-works are music only in the last line, but in the first they contain a poetic subject." We may imagine how Wagner would have been hooted at by all the Leipzig set, had the first half of this sentence found its way into print; but he goes on to ask if that *subject* itself could be borrowed from mere music, any more than a poet could take his subject from mere words, a painter from mere colours? Yet such was the only logical explanation of the treatment meted out to Beethoven by every German conductor of that era: "Mendelssohn's execution of Beethoven's works was always directed to their purely-musical aspect, never to their poetic

contents, which he was totally incapable of seizing—otherwise he must have brought something very different to light himself. Mendelssohn's conducting, in spite of great technical refinement, always left me unsatisfied in the main concern; it was as if he did not trust himself to let be said what Beethoven had meant to say, and because he was uncertain in his own mind whether anything were said at all, and if so, what. So, with the finest musical subtlety he always abode by the letter, like our philologists expounding Greek poetry by particles and variants, but never in its actual substance." By way of illustration, Mendelssohn's conducting of the first movement of the Ninth Symphony is adduced, "which he took so fast as to turn the whole movement into the complete antithesis of what it is. . . . There I plainly saw the reason why he himself could compose no other thing than what he did." *

A wide field lay open for discussion here, and Wagner alone could have explored it. With "The goal of this endeavour?—*The Drama*—" he hurriedly cuts short his notes—"In this sense alone should matters be discussed in future in the Zeitschrift für Musik"; but, as he had remarked two months before (to U., Dec. 18), "If I were to write about the sort of music for which a musical journal is practically founded, I should have to express my contempt in terms so strong that Brendel would get into trouble again; for I should not confine myself to attacking the abstract class—as was virtually the case in the *Judaism*—but unmercifully should tan the hides of individuals.—Now that my books are out, nothing can possibly tempt me to general reflections again." In effect, with exception of a couple of printed manifestos to theatres about to mount his operas, and so forth, the little cycle just-reviewed constitutes his last literary effort for many a year. "I *refuse* to write any more"—he tells Liszt on March 4, '52—"So soon as the atmosphere shall turn but a little warm and bright, I set to work on my poem." To fill the interval, as we have lately seen, came the first Swiss performance of an overture of his: that was now to be followed by an opera which untoward circumstances had condemned to sleep for eight long years.

Just as the *Tannhäuser* overture had been extorted from

* For a qualification of this verdict, so far as concerns Mendelssohn's talent for "musical landscape-painting," see vol. ii, p. 18 *n*.

Wagner after the abandonment of his special concert programme for this summer, so the *Flying Dutchman*—the simplest of the three to mount—was forced from him by friends who had shaken their heads at his intended model presentation of the "three operas" in the summer of next year. Our earliest intimation is dated two days after his first Zurich Panharmonic concert of this winter: "Schöneck, the conductor at our theatre, a very talented and uncommonly energetic young man, is tormenting me to let him have the Dutchman for his benefit in March"—writes Wagner to Uhlig, Jan. 22, '52—"I'm almost giving way, as I convinced myself yesterday that the performers here are decidedly quite good, whilst the Holländer himself might even be very good. The director offers to do incredible things in the matter of scenery; the orchestra would be voluntarily augmented to a decent strength. Only, my longing for quiet stands in the road, also my general aversion to having anything to do with our Theatre and Public. From all sides I am besieged, however, so shall leave it to fate to decide." The "Gottesurtheil" (cf. *Lohengrin*) to which he suggests an appeal, is the consent of Lüttichau to lend the Dresden band-parts, through old Fischer's intervention. "If I *must*" represents his attitude, from first to last; for this was something altogether different from his own idea of a carefully prepared *series* of productions *out* of the ordinary season and its hurry and rush.

A fortnight later we hear of negotiations between the lessee of the theatre and a scene-painter at Munich, "But I still am hoping for a hitch"—writes Wagner—"so that I may at least have the Spring and summer free." Feb. 26 comes a sigh of relief: "Nothing is likely to come of the Dutchman here this season, thank God!" The relief is fallacious; about the middle of March old Fischer is approached again, with a definite request to despatch those Dresden parts post-haste: "I was hoping all along to keep my neck quite free of the noose; and with a good prospect, too, as the Munich scene-painter declared he had not time to mount the opera. But my joy was soon to be damped, since the director of our theatre fished up a wandering scene-painter and machinist, who has supplied him with sketches that certainly display much skill. Moreover my friends here—to me the main consideration—are seizing me by the throat, to give them a whole opera of mine for once; so I have ended by

consenting, and can no longer hold back." And to Uhlig on the 20th, "The Flying Dutchman affair is settled for the second half of April. I was obliged to give in, my friends here are so importunate. A scene-painter and machinist are [rather, is] already engaged; everything possible is to be done for the band, and so on; the singers are competent. And so—the performance will apparently be good — perhaps right good. The Tannhäuser overture has imbued me once more with a high opinion of my knack of making the impossible possible.—I only wish the Ritters would come here to see the performance." Uhlig, Fischer, Liszt—all were pressingly invited; but none could come. Liszt in fact (who had never *seen* this opera which he was proposing to produce at Weimar) is begged to bring—not his own princess, but the Hereditary Grand Duchess: an amusing trait, but characteristic of Wagner's sense of complete equality with these grandees.

By the middle of April, according to the letter of invitation to Liszt, Wagner is "in the thick of rehearsing." Yet even now his personal disinclination to make an appearance as opera-composer in so old a suit of clothes is evinced by a repetition of the statement: "Some of my friends here gave me no peace; after hearing the Tannhäuser-overture they insisted on having a taste of one of my operas also. At last I allowed myself to be beguiled, and am about to offer to the imagination of my friends as good a travesty of my opera as can be managed. At anyrate everything possible is being done to eke out the illusion as regards mounting and orchestra; the singers are neither worse nor better, by a hair, than anywhere else. So I will see what the best of will and a fabulous belief in me can bring to pass." From an earlier letter to Fischer it would seem that he had expected Schöneck, "really a capital young fellow," to relieve him of the principal exertions; but, as usual, he eventually felt bound to shoulder almost the entire burden himself: a whole week after the last performance he writes to his old friend, "I am fearfully done up; for, naturally, the result was only to be achieved after the most terrible rehearsals." The singers had to be put through a completely new course of training, to turn them into something like Wagnerian exponents; a faint idea of which may be gathered from his technical *Remarks on performing the Flying Dutchman opera.**

* Autographed under date Dec. 22, 1852; see *Prose Works* III.

To reinforce the choruses, he borrowed members from the ordinary acting-company; a minor point of some significance, seeing that the town was rich in 'vocal unions.' For the orchestra, director Loewe had promised to engage a few additional bandsmen beyond the volunteering amateurs: evidently disgusted with his stingy terms ("Loewe is a Jew!"), at the last moment they wrote to decline; and Wagner, who was to receive no manner of reward himself, had to put his hand into his own pocket for a first violin from Aarau ("ten days' compensation for lessons missed"), for the 'cellist Böhm, and for other outside bandsmen who had helped to render the *Tannhäuser* overture. Nor was that all. To get the scenery into thorough working order, it was essential that the theatre should remain closed on the evening before the first performance. Loewe objected to the loss of revenue; so Wagner again had to "do the handsome," paying him the equivalent of an average night's takings—an act of generosity which appears to have alarmed the composer's Dresden patroness, Frau Ritter, for he has to defend it on artistic grounds in a letter to Uhlig ending with the assurance that he "will certainly fly no more Dutchmen!"

To the dramatist it was like a dive into ancient history, this renewal of acquaintance with an opera composed from ten to eleven years ago. "On the whole, this work has interested me much," he writes Uhlig, March 25. "It has an uncommonly penetrative colour, and of the greatest distinctness. Surprising it is, how constrained I still was in my musical declamation, and how the operatic vocal manner (e.g.) still lay like a weight on my fancy." Had he not been preoccupied with a new and far grander creation, we might perhaps have had an entirely remodelled *Flying Dutchman*, with the declamation all levelled up to its present finest parts, and every operatic mannerism banished: in his *Remarks* of next December, referring to Erik's cavatina in the third act, he goes the unwonted length of imploring conductors "either to alter or strike out whatever might justify a wrong conception of this piece, such as its falsetto passage and final cadenza" (*P.* III. 217). Whether he adopted the latter course himself at Zurich, is not on record; but some parts of the orchestration at least he now overhauled, nor for Zurich alone. "I'm sending you to-day an amended score of the 'Fliegender Holländer,' so that

you may get copies revised in accordance, against the conceivable event of their being asked for"—says the letter just-cited. "To bring the instrumentation into line with my present experience, I should have had entirely to recast the most of it; a task I naturally did not relish. To reduce the brass e.g. to reasonable proportions, I should have had to alter everything else; since the brass was no mere casualty here, but conditioned by the very nature, not only of the instrumentation, but of the whole composition itself . . . . So I have simply weeded out the brass where it was purely superfluous, shaded it a little more humanly here and there, and made radical changes only in the close of the overture. As I remember, it was just this close that always irritated me in the performances: now, I believe, it will answer my original intentions"—thus to some extent justifying old adverse criticisms. How much more sensitive his ear had become since the time the *Holländer* was written, may also be seen in a remark of this epoch concerning the original instrumentation of the *Faust* overture: "I cannot feel displeased with this composition, though many a point in it would scarcely have issued from my pen to-day; in particular, the somewhat too frequent brass is no longer to my mind" (to L., May 29, '52).

The refinement in his sense of musical colour had really supervened six years before, as he learns to his own surprise to-day. To save him the time and expense of copying, old Fischer has procured and sent the Dresden band-parts.* When they arrive, and have been handed to Schöneck for adjustment to the newly-amended score, it is discovered that they had already been far more radically revised in the old Dresden days. "In 1846 Dr Schmidt, at that time director of the Leipzig theatre, asked

* In Letter 16 to Fischer—undated, but assignable to about the 18th of March '52—the request is for "3 first violin parts, 2 second—2 violas, 3 'celli and bass parts, and all the wind." Presumably not more than two players sat at one desk, so that we may calculate for ourselves the poverty of the executant means at Wagner's disposal. The next sentence is homely enough, but admits us to the secret of his administrative achievements; not the smallest detail escapes him: "That you mayn't have too much trouble, I advise you to get Uhlig to attend to the packing and sending off: I know he has a good supply of packing-canvas. In any case—as time presses—the packet must come by post, not by goods-train, and direct to the address of Theatre-director Loewe in Zurich." That "supply of canvas" is eloquent of the organiser of victory; every buckle in his commissariat is at his finger's ends.

me for the score of the Flying Dutchman for performance there. I very carefully amended the instrumentation—in the light of my Tannhäuser experience—and sent the revision to Schmidt. It pleased God that nothing should come of the performance, but I was too accommodating to ask for the useless score to be sent me back from Leipzig." What bitter memories of bygone disappointments re-echo from those words "the useless score" (see vol. ii, 143); for it now came back to Wagner's mind that, ere sending the score to Leipzig in '46, he had had the band-parts belonging to the *Dresden* theatre corrected to match it, in the futile hope of a revival of his opera in the city where he then was engaged as Kapellmeister. Well, well! they are to be put to some use at last, though the first result of the discovery is fresh confusion: "The parts don't agree with the score I have here; but I do not want them altered again, since the old revision was more thorough. Now, I'm pretty certain I had the Dresden *score* altered at the time, as well; so that there should be *two* copies of the score in the theatre-bureau, the older one in manuscript, and a new one lithographed and revised" * (to U. Apr. 9). So Fischer has to send off the said Dresden score in the hottest haste, in pursuit of the parts, and Wagner can scarcely have received it much more than a week before the actual production.

Then there was the whole stage-management to be mapped

* The letter continues: "But there is a further issue to the affair. For the copy to be supplied to Weimar, and later perhaps elsewhere, I should like you to take that earlier revision as your model. Merely the close of the overture should be altered in accordance with the latest revision, the rest according to the older one, unless it should happen that here and there my recent arrangements have been more thorough. For this purpose I should wish you to try and recover the Leipzig score itself." For the Leipzig people, with a strange sense of the rights of property, had hitherto retained the score, though they had never paid a farthing for it—the fee of 100 thalers not falling due until *after* a performance, which had not taken place. It was a repetition of the fate that had attended the score of his juvenile Symphony in the same city.—Upon returning the Dresden score and parts, at the end of the Zurich week, Wagner confirms his estimate of that earlier revision: "As to correcting the Holländer score, I necessarily refer you to the score now on its way back to the Dresden theatre; I had amended it myself before, in red, and much more thoroughly than in my last revision—in particular, the brass is much more carefully reduced. Only the overture—close—have I recently treated more thoroughly."

out and superintended. "My Dutchman will fly here on the 20th. Sea and rocks are being painted, ships carpentered, and so on—a regular hubbub. A nice ado for me again" (to U. Apr. 4). That "wandering scene-painter and machinist" (whose name is given on the playbills as Herr Ludwig Caesmann from Hamburg) must have been a fairly sharp thorn in the flesh: "The man is uncommonly mediocre in himself, and my only reason for recommending him is that he has learnt up the subject under my—terribly tormented!!—guidance, and according to my most special indications. . . . I would rather not have any more to do with him personally, as he has a passion for spongeing on my poor-devil self"—Wagner writes (May 24 and July 9) in reply to Liszt's inquiries about sketches for Weimar. "The scenery naturally was meagre, rough and small of scale; yet I took care that everything should be distinctly suggested and carried out sufficiently for the purpose; so that this production might fairly serve as model to the larger stages, which would only have to follow it with more elaborate means. The orchestra was frequently quite excellent, the chorus animated and fresh"—so old Fischer is told when the business is over.

One thing and another made it impossible to give the first performance on the 20th of April, but the postponement was merely to Sunday the 25th. For the author, it was the first time he had either conducted or heard a complete work of his own for over three years, and a work never yet done justice to. As for Zurich, the importance of the event was gauged by Director Loewe to the tune of 5 francs for the best seats and 75 centimes for the top gallery, prices very much higher than had ever been asked at this theatre before: the name of Wagner had obviously become what is popularly termed 'a draw,' and full advantage should be taken of it—by the director. That was the business-man's mode of looking at it. The literary man regarded the event from a loftier standpoint: "Richard Wagner, to whose high artistic enthusiasm we already owe repeated pleasures of the noblest kind in the concert-room"—remarks the *Eidgenössische* of April 27, "no longer was able to resist the pressure of all his friends, and has done the public of our city the honour of setting one of his works, the *Flying Dutchman*, upon our stage." Yet even this friendly report places it beyond question that the opera fell somewhat flat on its first Swiss night: "An unlucky star had ruled

that the principal exponent should be attacked with sudden hoarseness, whereby the success of the first performance, to which everybody had been looking forward with keen expectancy, was naturally jeopardised. In spite of this regrettable mischance, however, the opera has made its mark, and we do not entertain a moment's doubt that a second performance will achieve that perfect triumph this masterpiece deserves. . . . If Herr Pichon but sings as he sang at the rehearsals, he may be sure of the fullest acclaim, and the chief situations in the opera, endangered last Sunday by his hoarseness, will certainly not miss their transporting effect." Frau Rauch-Wernau, also, the Senta, was "still suffering from a long indisposition," according to the same contemporary, though "she went through her rôle with all energy and certainty of feeling." Two of the minor rôles, the Steersman of Herr Bölken and the Erik of Herr Kaufhold, are mentioned with praise; whereas old Fischer's nephew, the Daland, is cautioned against playing his part in the low-comedy vein: "moreover his make-up was too young, and too poor and undignified for a ship's captain."*

A *Flying Dutchman* with the two chief exponents more or less indisposed must have been a terrible ordeal for Wagner, after slaving night and day for a production forced upon him. "The very first performance made it clear to me," he writes Uhlig, "that I must abandon all illusions as to 'drama,' and content myself with making as much as I could of the remnant of 'opera' that still cleaves to the work." Nevertheless he is "bound to admit that the impression on my audience was most unwonted, deep and earnest." That would refer rather to the repetitions, yet there was one at least of his first hearers who had received

* The remaining minor rôle was taken by Frau Schöneck, according to the programme (for the 2nd performance) reprinted by Herr Steiner in his brochure already cited. There the scenery is described: "Act I. 1) Rocks on the Norwegian sea-coast. Act II. 2) Interior of a Norwegian dwelling. Act III. 3) Another part of the coast. 4) Final transformation.—Apotheosis. —On account of the scenic arrangements the entr'actes will last a little longer than usual." That fourth tableau is of interest, as pointing to a complete change of scene, but we can ascertain no further particulars about it. Finally we have the information that not only the "abonnement," but the "free list is suspended"; that textbooks were offered at the rather stiff price, for those days, of 65 centimes; also that, in spite of unusually long entr'actes, the performance began at 7 P.M. and ended at 9.30.

the impression from the beginning, for the *Eidgenössische* of April 27 continues: "Wagner's subject has nothing in common with the vapid texts of modern operas. Here for once we have a poem in the true sense of the word, a plot that can stir man's deepest essence; here for once we have a drama intelligently planned, profound and true in its development, noble and dignified in form. And this dramatic poem, in itself a fine creation, is embellished, enriched, ennobled to the utmost by its wonderfully musical setting; with the result that we have a whole before us, where poetry and music unite in the fairest bond, and the highest possible expression of plastic portrayal is attained. . . . Those whose taste is for neck-breaking runs, trills and colorature, for sugary sing-song or sentimental arias, must have been disappointed. Here we have music fresh, alive, and with grit in it, a progressive action that allows no obligato resting-places for applause. Not that Wagner's music lacks at all in melody, nor that he despises the effects producible by modern improvements in instrumental technique, or the beauty of scenery; but the great distinction with him, is that these effects are admitted only where the inner action imperatively demands them as means of expression."—Whoever wrote those lines, whether Spyri or Baumgartner, their author had undoubtedly got to the root of the matter even in this early example of Wagnerian drama, and puts to shame not merely the Dresden and Berlin critics of the 'forties, but many a better-known reviewer of much more recent date.—To come to the tangible outward issue: "We were pleased to find that the overture in particular—in which the three chief themes of the opera: the motive of the 'Flying Dutchman,' the redeeming motive of Senta, and the motive of the merry sailors, are combined in the most ingenious fashion—was received by the audience with vociferous applause. Nor should we omit to mention that Wagner was tumultuously called at the close of the performance." So, with the generality of the audience, it had been a similar case to that of *Lohengrin* at Weimar: a success of the *orchestral* composer and conductor, more than anything else; and in view of all the circumstances, we do not wonder.

The second night, Wednesday April 28, made full amends. During the rehearsals Wagner had written Fischer that the barytone and soprano in especial were "really very good";

now that they both had recovered their voices, the result of his careful dramatic schooling of them had its due effect, for he reports to Fischer afterwards, "The singers, particularly the exponent of the principal rôle, barytone Pichon, I so drew out of themselves that they not only astounded the public by their new attainments, but often delighted even myself"; and to Liszt, "The singer of the Dutchman here did more for me, by far, than the Dresdner and Berliner, although they had better voices." Thus, too, the sober *Eidgenössische* under date April 29: "Our belief has not deceived us. The second performance of Richard Wagner's 'Flying Dutchman' reaped the completest success. In particular the great duet in the second act, rendered with high perfection this time, roused the audience to true enthusiasm. The composer was called twice, at the close and after the second act. The modest artist would not appear except in company of Herr Pichon and Frau Rauch-Wernau, who had performed his work with so much love and such success. Yesterday's triumph was loud enough to silence even the weak-nerved croakers in the *Tagblatt* of to-day; they have our pity for issuing too early from their holes, to which they had better retire at once." From which we may gather, not only that a fragmentary opposition was trying to uplift its head (inspired by Abt?), but that the work had really been on the verge of failure at the first performance. The *Eidgenössische*, however, was not its only journalistic advocate; in addition to another Zurich paper, the *Bund* of Berne also expressed the general appreciation in sundry eulogistic reports.*

The third performance, Friday the 30th April, had still greater success, as was to be anticipated, once the work had made definite headway. Again the house was full, though the exceptionally high prices were maintained. This time a laurel-wreath was handed up to the composer, which he gallantly transferred to his "Senta," who has preserved it as a precious relic through exactly half a century. It was becoming that the tribute should go to the gentler sex, for thence had it come: "The ladies were naturally to the fore"—he tells Uhlig, May 3—"after the third performance they crowned me and heaped me with flowers."

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* One of these will be found in the Appendix; its author's name is undiscoverable, but the style is certainly not that of the writer in the *Eidgenössische.*

So the octave came round on Sunday, May 2, reported by the *Eidgenössische* as follows: "The fourth performance of the 'Flying Dutchman' had another crowded house. The composer and his associates were rewarded by the audience with the same tumultuous cheers, in which the orchestra joined with a rousing Tusch in grateful honour of the master. It certainly may be denoted an event, that an opera of this earnest, nay, sombre character has been given four times in one week at Zurich to completely full houses; for the opera's success this fact is decisive." A notable event indeed, considering that it had taken a whole month for the *Dutchman* to attain its fourth performance in Dresden, and seven weeks in Berlin—followed by a silence that in each case was to extend over twenty years. At Zurich it might have been repeated ad infinitum just now, for Wagner assures his Dresden friends: "The director was quite inconsolable at having already booked carriages to take his company off to Geneva, since he was confident that in the next eight days he could have given the opera 5 times more, with precisely the same success," and the same nice personal profit. Yet Wagner, who had done the whole thing, got nothing for his pains but—flowers! "Philistines, whom nobody had been able to drive to the theatre or concert-room before, attended each of the 4 performances in a week, and are now supposed to have gone crazy. With all the *ladies* I have won a mighty feather in my cap. The pianoforte-scores are being ordered in half-dozen batches." A grain of comfort for his publication-creditors, but absolutely unremunerative to himself. Not even a "benefit" performance does he get, either now or at any time in Zurich, though he willingly conducts for others' "benefits," and even lavishes on them his scanty funds.

There was a little fly in the ointment, too. In the midst of all the jubilation a Zurich newspaper opened its columns to a rhymed dispute. A certain J. J. Reithard, "poet and littérateur," * objecting to what he absurdly terms the "auction" of Senta by her father, calls the Holländer "a bluebeard" and the betrothal "the triumph of un-nature over true love." The defence was

* See A. Steiner's *Neujahrsblatt* (1901). The name of the newspaper is not recorded, but it would probably be that *Tagblatt* twitted by the *Eidgenössische*.

taken up by a Dr Ottensoser, leading to a still more vicious rejoinder from Reithard; but we need not go into details of the squabble: its lines are too familiar in a literary controversy where one of the parties refuses to allow anything whatever to poetical licence. It would scarcely call for mention, did it not afford a clue to the following allusion in Wagner's *Remarks:* "I beseech the impersonator of Daland not to drag his rôle into the region of low comedy.* He is a rough figure from common life, a seaman who braves tempest and danger for sake of gain, and to whom the sale—in a manner of speaking—of his daughter to a rich man would not appear at all disgraceful: he thinks and deals, like a hundred thousand others, without the least suspicion of doing any wrong" (*P.* III. 217). At the time, nevertheless, the squabble must have much upset the master's equanimity, for exactly two months after the last Zurich performance he writes Uhlig: "Enclosed are documents concerning the newspaper war (*Tageblattstreit*) over the Flying Dutchman. The reply of the 'Züricher' [Dr Ottensoser] was followed by a spiteful, vulgarly insulting answer, which I have not preserved; for that matter, it was really directed against my 'toadies,' and maintained a shy respect towards myself. The old manœuvre! — The Nationalzeitung also is said to be belabouring me: I shan't read it, because that sort of thing invariably fills my head for several days, and it might easily be better occupied. I am by no means trying to represent myself as less sensitive than I am; and such experiences always make me regret having given anything of mine" (July 2, '52).

It was not alone the paltry sallies of the "Tagblatt" that had made him "regret having given" the Zurichers his *Dutchman*, for the same letter remarks: "Nobody who merely had the outward success in eye could understand my profound dissatisfaction, and above all, that this dissatisfaction was principally concerned with the character of the *representation*—which they all thought so good." After all, the general applause had been directed to the operatic element in the *Dutchman*, as Wagner tells Uhlig when

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* As young Fischer had done at the first performance (*vid.* p. 313 *ant.*), though he must have mended his ways thereafter, since Wagner writes his old Dresden friend May 9, "Your nephew played the Daland, and right well."

summing up in May: "Its success really left me altogether cold, and has not changed a jot in my internal attitude toward Theatre and Public, albeit I recognise that the 'Holländer' has made its effect as 'opera.'" The whole affair, especially at such a crisis in his artist-life, had been little more than a weariness of the flesh to him: "It has torn me quite out of my composure again, and I shall require a long time to recover"—the preliminary draft for the poem of *Die Walküre* had had to be laid aside unfinished, as we shall see next chapter. "I cannot pull round as yet, and am suffering from sleeplessness with great dejection. Only once again in my life can I sacrifice myself to get up a performance: that shall be for my Siegfried—if ever I attain to it. Till then I must hold entirely aloof from all such undertakings: and *after* Siegfried there will be an end of it. Adieu Kapellmeister!!. . . I am hoping and hoping to be able to get to the country. My surroundings often torture me much. Ah! I've been quite wretched again! Herwegh—the unique—has suffered with me in silence; what else could he do?" If the philistines who had gone crazy over the Zurich performances had been a shade more human to begin with, they would have refused to let their sorcerer thus fritter away his small remains of health without at least some practical solatium to help him take a little change of scene himself. Most certainly he will "fly no more Dutchmen" for them; good Frau Ritter may rest assured of that.

Cruel as it may sound, however, the strain of this winter at Zurich may be said to have been necessary to Wagner's new creation. Beethoven, the *Holländer*, ill-health, sleepless nights, repeated disillusions—all were factors in the evolution of that colossal drama which had occupied the background of his brain since ever he returned from Albisbrunn. It was the storm preparing for the springtime of a poet's inner calm.

VII.

THE WOTAN DRAMA.

A winter of incubation.—Spring brings the drafting of Rheingold *and* Walküre.—*A few weeks at the "Rinderknecht"; tiresome visitors; "diction" of* Die Walküre; *the poem written in a month. — Simplicity, unity and balance. — Siegmund versus Siegfried. Wotan's intensely human character.—Slackness at the Weimar theatre; Berlioz'* Cellini; *an olla podrida.—Liszt gives the* Faust *overture and* Liebesmahl; *Ballenstedt festival.—*Lohengrin *dedicated to Liszt; his lips unsealed.—A flying trip across the Alps: "peace I did not find."*

> *My artistic plans keep expanding to richer, more grateful and confident proportions; and it is with a positive shiver of delight that I think of working at them presently.*
>
> R. Wagner (to Uhlig, Nov. 28, 1851).

Since the end of Chapter V. the Nibelungen-trilogy has claimed but little of our notice; yet the above motto fairly represents its progress during the winter of 1851-52. A period of abstinence from intellectual exertion had been prescribed to Wagner, and his brain most certainly required to lie fallow awhile before it could be tilled to such a crop. Yet behind all his efforts to raise the standard of musical taste in Zurich—his winter pastime, so to say —his magnum opus was continually in his mind, maturing in silence and needing but the breath of Spring to burst its swathings. Scarcely a week passes, but he refers to the near approach of the task of his life. One or two of these references we have quoted in another connection; to give some idea of the extent to which the subject was dominating his thought, we now must marshal them in chronologic order:—*

December 3, 1851: "I am living for nothing but my health—

* From various letters to Uhlig, Liszt, and Frau Ritter (the latter unpublished).

and my dramatic project." Dec. 14, "I'm taking a rest after the somewhat trying effects of my late cure: I shall not go in for much this winter—but sketch everything out, so that my whole poem may be ready by the commencement of summer." In the latter third of December, after receiving from Uhlig the loan of a copy of the Volsungasaga from the Dresden Royal Library: "Down to the present I have abstained from whatever might bring me face to face with my great poem, in order to give it time—especially amid the frosts of winter. However, I have rapidly glanced through the saga once more, and convinced myself that I need it no longer. So I return you the booklet with many thanks for your obligingness." Jan. 1, 1852: "I shall have no rest before I go to my great work: there's absolutely nothing for it, but to consume myself again. Merely, I shall try to prevent its clashing with my cure of next Spring." Jan. 22: "You'll soon find me deep in my Nibelungen-poem; 'tis my sole salvation." Jan. 30: "If I now turn my thoughts to my great work, it really is for nothing but to seek salvation from my misery, oblivion of my life." March 4: "I refuse to write any more essays. So soon as the air becomes a little warm and bright again, 'twill be poetry that has me." Then the longed-for Spring arrives: "Nature is waking, and with her I wake from the winter of discontent." March 20: "I'm terribly fatigued again [after the *Tannhäuser* overture], but in view of the Spring and my poem to be begun, I pluck up heart." March 25: "With Spring commencing, my big poem takes more and more hold of me. I shall soon be at work; the wealth of material already is growing wellnigh to excess, and I must soon begin, to get it out of me sooner. Anyhow—*it will be something*, the utmost that is in me to do." Begun it is, a day or two later, almost simultaneously with the *Dutchman* rehearsals: April 4, "The complete sketch for my long *prologue* has been ready these last few days, and the summer shall see my big poem achieved." So Das Rheingold is drafted, the bulk of the wealth of *new* ideas discharged. Apr. 9: "By May I shall be up to my ears in poetry: already I am drafting"—presumably Die Walküre now. Apr. 13: "This fine Spring weather is making me cheerful again, after a tolerably gloomy winter, and at last I'm attacking my poem again. If I lived in Naples or Andalusia, or on one of the Antilles, I should turn out much more poetry and music

than in our grey cloudy climate, which disposes to nothing but abstractions." The growing pressure of the *Dutchman* performances breaks off all creative occupation for the next two or three weeks. After they are over, "Henceforward I have nothing before me but my poems." But it will be necessary to flee the Zurich circle first; accordingly, May 12, "I move into the country to-day to be quit alike of business and annoyance, in order to commune with my muse once more."

It is to no water-establishment that Wagner goes this time, as once proposed; his faith in that drastic regimen had been rudely shaken during the last few months. Moreover, "It is quite impossible for me to spend half a year at a hydro: to bid complete goodbye to intellectual life and creative work, for me, is the certain source of fresh ailments and discomforts." Not long ago he had heard through Ernst Kietz of a certain Dr Karl Lindemann, a fellow-exile, then "working remarkable cures in Paris with a marvellously mild water régime. His speciality seems to be nervous disorders." So he had written Lindemann a detailed account of his symptoms, and received a regular chart of instructions to cover a protracted period: for diet, chiefly game simply cooked, with a glass or two of good wine; his baths to be tepid rather than cold; the main affair —"I'm to keep quiet and write poetry." Very sensible advice all round, to a man whose head was simply bursting with dramatic plans.

The *Dutchman* "extravagance" necessitating a spell of economy, absolute change of scene was out of the question at present, and Wagner had to content himself with one of the hills at the back of Zurich. It so happened that a member of the Ritter family, the daughter Julie, had come over from Elgg with her newly-married husband, chamber-musician Kummer of Dresden, for the last performance of the *Dutchman;* looking about for a quiet lodging for them, as they wished to prolong their enjoyment of his company, Wagner hit on a rustic hostelry, the "Rinderknecht," on the slopes above Fluntern, a quarter of an hour or so from town: "The site was so beautiful, and I'm so much in need of country air, that I promptly decided to take rooms for ourselves in the selfsame inn. So from to-day we shall be living on the same plot of ground as the Kummers" (to U. May 12). There, with a splendid outlook over the lake and

Limmat valley, across to the snow-clad Glarus alps, he was to complete the literary scaffold of *Die Walküre*. "The open air is doing me much good," he tells Uhlig on the last day of May; "every morning I roam about for 2 to 3 hours before setting to work. My working-time itself I don't extend beyond two hours a day; it was by frequently working from 5 to 6 hours that I overtaxed my nerves before.—I have finished the entire draft of the 'Walküre' now: * to-morrow I start the verses. More than ever am I taken with the spacious grandeur and beauty of my subject; my whole world-view has found in it its completest artistic expression."

Those roamings among the hills were the more conducive to creative work as they were mostly taken alone; for Kummer soon had to go away to the doctor, leaving his wife in the Wagners' care; "We are alone here now, with Julie; K. is at Hahn's. Julie seems to have taken a great fancy to me; at anyrate, she follows my advice to the letter" (to U. May 31). Cäcilie Avenarius appears to have paid them a visit, however, according to the reminiscences of Frau Wesendonck, who remarks on the calming influence always exercised by this sister of Wagner's on his domestic situation; the Wesendoncks themselves also seem to have come for the master's nine-and-thirtieth birthday. Less welcome guests soon found their way up, for we have Wagner complaining to Liszt of "tiresome visits" by the middle of June, and Frau Wille records that Minna was always fond of company. It was at this time, on the other hand, that a lasting friendship with the Willes began; though the wife, then Frln Sloman, had met the Wagners nine years before at Dresden (vol. ii, 15). In another chapter the reader shall be taken to their pleasant home a few miles out of Zurich, which they had entered last autumn; for the present suffice it to say that Wagner's first note to Eliza Wille is dated May 18, '52, in response to an invitation: "I should prefer not to leave my refuge quite so soon as next Sunday, and therefore beg you not to expect my wife and self

* Two days previously, viz. May 29, he had written Liszt: "My whole Nibelungen-tetralogy is completely finished as to the draft, and in a couple of months the verses shall also be." So a day or two's holiday is being taken in the interval, and we may therefore fix the 30th as that "Sunday in May" when he paid his first visit to the Willes, with Herwegh as companion.

until a later Sunday." Professor Ettmüller, one of the Willes' constant Sunday guests, had just acquainted them with the fact of Wagner's residence in Zurich—so Frau Wille has it, though one would have thought the much-bruited *Dutchman* week might more easily account for an impromptu overture. In the light of this apparent looseness of the lady's memory—which we shall encounter in a less disputable degree hereafter—it becomes unnecessary to take the continuation of her sentence too strictly, namely that Ettmüller had told her "that the celebrated composer was studying the Norse heroic sagas and the Edda, and seeking advice and explanation, for which reason Ettmüller saw him often." Wagner, who even in Dresden at least had read *about* Ettmüller's writings, had certainly associated with him 'off and on' from his own first arrival in Zurich; but it is extremely unlikely that, the whole plan of the Nibelungen-myth having been sketched pretty amply in 1848, and two of the dramas since actually versified, he should now be seeking for more than verification of a legendary detail or so. In any case *Das Rheingold* would be almost the only part of the tetralogy where the "advice" of an archæologist could now be of much assistance;* consequently, if Ettmüller's knowledge was taken fee of, it would rather be with regard to Loge and Erda, who do not appear in the said prose-sketch at all.

To the dramatist it would have been infinitely preferable to have had Ettmüller for neighbour in his present retreat, than the irrepressible young Austrian poet who soon began to waylay him on his lonely walks, and haply to be numbered among those "tiresome visitors" that drove him from his refuge in the long run. Hermann Rollet, a worshipper of Gutzkow and friend of Alfred Meissner, had taken lodgings for the summer at Fluntern, below the *Rinderknecht;* having just contributed to the June number of the *Helvetia* a so-called "Outline of Richard Wagner's whole desire and ability in the province of musico-

* Ettmüller is said to have hunted up for Wagner two tenth-century Norwegian Scald-lays as basis for the Death-herald scene in *Die Walküre* (see p. 265 *ant.*), though it seems more probable that the object was a clearer definition of Walhall itself for *Das Rheingold* (see Meinck's *Sagenwiss. Grundlagen* p. 78 and Golther's *Sagengesch. Grundlagen* p. 56).

dramatic art,"* he deemed himself entitled to the post of button-holer. Continually would he arrange his own morning ramble so as to entrap the master at 7 o'clock in a summer-house midway between their two domiciles. "*He* was then writing his Nibelungen texts, and *I* my 'Jukunde,' published the next year in Leipzig," says this mediocrity; our only surprise is that his peculiar sense of proportion did not lead him to put the "*I*" first. However, the poetaster's impudence—in the stricter sense of the term—is really quite amusing; wherefore we will bear with him a little longer, as Wagner must have done for the same reason. To these morning encounters the master is alleged to have "generally brought the latest-written section of his poem," and read it out. "Considering the often atrocious forms of his poetic diction, this naturally led to many a remark on my side, to which he listened, but seemed to pay small heed." If Dr Rollet satirised himself as naïvely in those days, it must have been refreshing to meet him—once or twice. Joking apart, he has something of interest to tell us. When it came to the *Winterstürme wichen dem Wonnemond*, Rollet "jumped for joy," and declared he must hear the melody for *that* at once; then Wagner tore a page from his pocket-book, drew five parallel lines on it, jotted down the melody and text almost exactly as they stand to-day, and sang the passage to his button-holer; whereupon the latter begged the souvenir, and thus was the first to come into possession of a morsel of the tone-set drama. † There seems no reason to challenge this part of Rollet's story, as Wagner writes Liszt on June 16: "My Walküre is turning

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* An appalling title even in its native German, *Gedrängter Umriss von Richard Wagner's ganzem Wollen und Können im Bereiche der musikalisch-dramatischer Kunst.* After such a mouthful, we feel no wonder at the author's dictum regarding Wagner's operatic *texts:* while admitting an "undeniable power of dramatic construction," he considers them deficient in "fluency and beauty, *Innigkeit und Sinnigkeit* in a simple popular form, in short, in poetry of language."—Dr Rollet's little recollection, the pith of which is given above, originally appeared in the *Neue freie Presse* of March 24, 1883, "Ein Autograph von Richard Wagner."

† It may be a fanciful assumption, but to me it seems that we may trace the see-saw of the first few bars of this love-song to the 'bad magnetism,' as the psychical people would term it, of Wagner's-button-holer. It is wonderful, however, what the composer developed from this rather trite beginning.—W. A. E.

out terribly beautiful. Before the summer's end I hope to be able to lay the poem of the whole tetralogy before you. The music will reel itself off quite easily, for it will merely be the *carrying out* of something *ready*."

But those "atrocious forms of his poetic diction": how long the ears of these smug little people, if they missed the dramatic point of lines such as "Dess' Dach dich deckt, dess' Haus dich hegt, Hunding heisst der Wirth"—to go no farther than the second scene of this same act! The English reader is at a great disadvantage when asked to accept an estimate of Wagner's position as verse-writer, since no translation in the world can possibly reproduce at once the sense and sound even of a language so nearly akin to our own; but so soon as one has mastered sufficient German to be able to follow the text of the *Ring* with the aid of a performance, nothing strikes one more forcibly than the marvellous variety of effects Wagner has obtained from his word-material, and above all in *Die Walküre*. Every shade of emotion is given its appropriate colour, now harsh, now soothing, now infinitely tender, now passionate as a storm in March; in place of similes, and all the usual ornaments of the verse-maker's art, we have a rhythm and a quality of sound that themselves describe the object. Take for instance "Zum Jagen zog mit dem Jungen der Alte"; do we not hear them breaking through the bracken of primeval forests? Or, "zu Schutt gebrannt der prangende Saal"—is there not a desolation expressed in the contrast of those vowels as moving as the tones that spring of themselves to clothe "Der Augen leuchtendes Paar?" What, again, could be more perfect in its sound-delineation than these other lines in the famous farewell: "wenn kindisch lallend der Helden Lob von holden Lippen dir floss"? None but a foreigner, or a congenital deaf-mute, ought to be excused for ignoring the genius and power displayed in the mere "language" of *Die Walküre*, in this respect perhaps the most perfect of all its author's works. But it was not the pond these minnows were accustomed to: these elegant little carpet-poets would have fainted, had they been commanded to write something similar, and therefore failed to appreciate it; they dabbled in arch conceits and trailing alexandrines, and they asked for something smooth and pretty, no matter whether it impeded the rush of thought or action, or wove gossamer around a gawk.

That basilisk of a poem was begun and completed in a month by the calendar. May 31, 1852, Wagner had told Uhlig, "To-morrow I start the verses"; July 2 he tells him, "Yesterday I finished my 'Walküre' after a month of work. . . . Once more I am somewhat severely knocked up: no doubt I work at too high pressure." And to Liszt, "The 'Walküre' I finished—as poem—on the 1st of July, after four weeks' work; had I taken 8 weeks over it, I should be better off now. I must keep to that for the future, and therefore cannot possibly fix a date for the termination of the whole, though I have reason to assume that the music will not cost me much pains." There and then might the music have been recorded (apart from its scoring) had phonographs existed in those days; little more would the poet have needed, than to sing it as it still was ringing in his head.

The period of gestation had commenced last November, when he wrote, to Liszt, "Imagine to yourself the wonderfully fatal love of Siegmund and Siegelind; Wodan in his deeply mysterious relation to that love; then in his dissension with Fricka, in his furious mastery of himself when—to comply with the moral code—he decrees Siegmund's death; finally the glorious Valkyrie Brünnhilde, as—divining Wodan's inmost thought—she disobeys the god, and is punished by him. Imagine this wealth of material as subject of a drama preceding the two Siegfrieds, and you will understand that it was no mere reflection, but genuine enthusiasm, that inspired me with my latest plan." And so, when he takes his pen in hand, the poem of *Die Walküre* is finished in 60 hours,* not an hour to a page of the present textbooks, with scarcely a minor variant from the edition now in use.† The lines had simply poured from him, so soon as the mental picture was complete. "On the whole I am in a good temper to-day," he writes Uhlig, July 2, "for when I've finished a thing like the 'Walküre' I always feel as if I had sweated a

* Unless we may suppose that the "two hours a day" expanded under the influence of the heat of creation as the task went on, or perhaps under that of the "bad weather we had the whole of June," which would confine him more to the house.

† The classical edition of 1872 (*Ges. Schr.* VI.) supplies below the current text of the scene between Wotan and Fricka a block of 126 short lines, 96 whereof have no representative in the drama as we know it, whilst the remaining 30 are practically common to both versions. Wagner calls this

huge anxiety out of me, an anxiety ever increasing toward the end of the work, a kind of dread lest I should spoil something: my signature and date foot the page as though the Devil were standing behind me, trying to stop my last stroke." Much the same had it been with the scoring of *Tannhäuser:* "the nearer I approached its completion, the more I was haunted by the notion that a sudden death would stay my hand" (vol. ii, p. 86); only there is a new element here, "*lest I should spoil something.*" Its author felt the supreme artistic responsibility he was incurring with the poem of *Die Walküre:* breathless he works at it, lest a mortal's breath should dim the mirror of the gods; and flawless it stands, the outcome of a veritable furnace-blast of inspiration.

Yes, flawless. The objections once raised to the situation in the first act, objections endorsed with all the weight of such a name as Schopenhauer's, have vanished into limbo, dispelled by the verdict of every cultured audience in the world. Where the critics feared, or feigned to fear, an offence to the public's moral sense, the public has taken the matter into its own hands, and the most proper-minded stage-director in the civilised world has no longer any scruple to present *Die Walküre* to his clients. Either, then, the most intelligent frequenters of every opera-house have all become decadents, or the grandeur of this subject raises it high above all questions of morality. We prefer to believe the latter, therefore shall omit the stock arguments pro and con the fatal love of Siegmund and Sieglinde, and merely emphasise the fact that the first act of *Die Walküre* is preceded in its author's scheme by a long elucidatory prologue, and followed by act after act displaying the relentlessness of the fate that like a sleuth-hound tracks all Wotan's efforts to maintain the lordship of the world. This act is but a portion of a great world-tragedy, and it is to Wagner's eternal honour that he has so presented it that the sympathies of any healthy-minded adult are never put to the blush. Let the objectors, if such still exist, compare this act (even without its antidote in act ii) with the

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block "the original form of the scene as sketched before its musical setting"; but the additional lines do not occur even in the private edition of 1853, so that they must have been struck out almost at once, probably at the time of fair-copying for the printer, Dec. '52. They do not appear in the German textbooks, and Mr Alfred Forman's is the only English translation that gives them.

termination invented for Gottfried's "Tristan und Isolde" by so highly-esteemed an antiquarian as Simrock, and they may possibly perceive the difference between the cleanliness of true genius and the pruriency of jog-trot talent.

Turning from ethics to art, and putting the music entirely aside, can you name another drama, since the time of Æschylus and Sophocles, where the height of emotional potency is attained with such simplicity of means? The author's *Tristan und Isolde* alone can equal it. With no more than three characters, and a rough hut for scene, the first act is set before us. In the second we have a bare mountain-side and five dramatis personæ, but never more than two of them are engaged in the action at one time. In the third the scenery is just as plain, save for the "Valkyries' ride" at the beginning and the necessary glow of fire at the end, whilst the actors again are but three, if we except the eight-voiced chorus, which itself forms a dramatic link between the two characters on whom really falls the entire burden of the act. *Siegfried* is restricted to equally few characters; but in *Die Walküre* the balance of construction is more perfect throughout, and in none of its acts is there a change of scene, other than that provided by atmospheric effects and so forth. The first and last acts of *Siegfried* and the Giants' scenes in *Rheingold* may be open to the charge of excessive length of dialogue; but where in the *Walküre* is a line too much? Wotan's long soliloquy in act ii? Only the case-hardened musician has ever found fault with that after *hearing* it, and simply because its musical accompaniment is purposely subdued until the climax demands a fuller outburst. Had the duty of reporting on Wagner's dramas been assigned in the first place to the dramatic expert, and not the mere musical critic, that soliloquy might long ago have been classed with the "To be or not to be" of *Hamlet*.—Then take the march of the drama; from the storm that drives the hunted Siegmund to his foeman's hearth, to the Valkyrie left sleeping in the hush of Nature amid the guarding flames, there is not a step in it but is vitally connected with what goes before and after: no surplusage here, no episode to force variety; yet not one chord of passion is left unstruck. To assert that the poem of *Die Walküre* would constitute an absolutely perfect drama *without* its music, is quite another thing; it would not have fulfilled its object, if it could.

This work, like *Tristan und Isolde* and the greater part of *Siegfried*, positively "yearns for music"—not to cover vacancies, but to steep it in the rich colour its intentional lack of imagery demands. It is a true drama, i.e. it calls for representation, not dumb reading; and the chief means of representation, with so essentially emotional a work, must be that art which can express emotions such as words but dimly shadow. To *Die Walküre* the very strictest application of the principles laid down in *Opera and Drama* may be made, and triumphantly will it stand the test.

To follow situations one by one, to trace agreements or disagreements with ancient myths and medieval legends, cannot be attempted by the chronicler of a life so crowded with events as that of Richard Wagner. The three chief characters in this tragedy, however, must not be so curtly dismissed: they mark a distinct advance in their author's inner evolution. Siegmund, Wotan and Brünnhilde: see how the two last-named have grown in stature since *Siegfried's Tod* was written in 1848. Omit the closing scene of the *Tod* (and *Götterdämmerung*) and Brünnhilde is little more than the revengeful virago of the *Nibelungenlied;* at least, the Brünnhilde as set before us, for an audience cannot be expected to read a preliminary history. Even *Young Siegfried*—so far as can be judged from its present form—does not inspire us with that admiration for her character which could only be gained after *witnessing* its splendid sympathy alike with Wotan and with Siegmund, leading to her defiance of the commands of a beloved father. In *Die Walküre* Brünnhilde proves herself divinely human.—And Siegmund? Only to the naivety and youthful buoyancy, the intense vitality of his son, can one's heart go out; in the *Tod* (and *Gtdg*), equipped with every possible advantage except brains, Siegfried is sent into the world by Brünnhilde to do "new deeds" for its benefit, yet thinks of nothing save sport and pleasure. Certainly it was the author's deliberate purpose to make of Siegfried an entirely "griefless being," but it runs counter to his own definition of the Hero, "the full-fledged *man*, endued with every purely-human feeling—of love, of grief, of force—in their highest strength and fulness";* and

* From the Explanatory Programme to the *Eroica* (Prose Works III.), written shortly before the *Young Siegfried* poem itself. In this connection

when Siegfried is slain, one feels that there is much to be said for Hagen's hatred of the type. But Siegmund—the whole nobility of the race comes out in him; eternally at war with the oppressors of others, his first thought after receiving the draught of mead at Sieglinde's hand is to quit the house lest ill befall her; a veritable man of sorrows, but one hour of joy is his, and he chooses the gloomy caves of Hela in preference to a Walhall that must part him from the woman who in him has put her trust. Siegmund, not Siegfried, would have been the fitting mate for Brynhild; but alas! all the myths and the legends doomed otherwise. Of all Wagner's heroes this Siegmund is the most unswervingly heroic, a character true as steel, a man every inch of him.—Nevertheless, the Wotan of *Die Walküre* is the figure that claims our highest interest and something far too deep to be denominated sympathy.

That Wagner's Wotan should ever have been called "a musical bore" (in company with Hans Sachs, by the way!) is attributable on the one hand to the perversity until recently shewn by newspaper editors in entrusting their "operatic" columns to persons the best part of whose lives was spent in the concert-room, on benches devoted to a mutual comparison of notes; on the other, to the sometime difficulty of finding a performer endowed alike with voice, brains and presence, commensurate to so unparalleled a task. Now that such a performer has been discovered in the person of Anton van Rooy, and the public itself has come to years of discretion, we no longer hear that foolish gibe: Wotan has taken at last his rightful place as central figure in the whole tetralogy. And it is *Die Walküre*, even more than *Das Rheingold*, that elevates him to this rank. Exactly how his character was conceived in the original version of *Young Siegfried* (1851), we are at present unable to say; but, as that drama was then intended to precede an unregenerate "Siegfried's Tod," it may be presumed that Wotan had not yet renounced the object for which Siegfried was to be his instrument: to wit, omnipotence, benevolent autocracy. When *Die Walküre* was written, on the contrary, the

it should be noted that the original poem of *Siegfried's Death* was followed within a month or so by the dramatic sketch of *Jesus of Nazareth*, the "man of sorrows and acquainted with grief"—as if its author at once had recognised the impossibility of his solitary attempt to compass "redemption" by means of a light-hearted egoist.

preliminary draft of *Rheingold* stood complete, and the final catastrophe must already have been planned; for in the letter announcing the termination of the *Walküre* poem we read, "The two Siegfrieds will now have to be strongly retouched, especially in whatever concerns the Gods themselves, for this part of the myth has since acquired a much preciser and more moving physiognomy" (to U., July 2, '52). Thus *Die Walküre*, with its prologue, not only is the product of maturer thought than the two "Siegfrieds," but casts a lengthening shadow over both of them; so that the fate of the original hero sinks into insignificance before the more imposing fate of a god and the world he had striven to mould. The Wanderer in *Young Siegfried* (if meant to be Wotan at all) can heretofore have played little beyond the rôle of an interested onlooker, confident that the balance will turn in his favour, but curious to watch the fortunes of the various characters involved. The Wotan of *Rheingold* is a dictator in the making, unscrupulous as to the means whereby to upbuild his rule, surrounded by other powers individually inferior to himself in capacity, but collectively a source of instant peril; of tenderness there is not as yet a trace in him, for it is a time of constant scheming to fortify his own position, when tenderness would but be weakness manifest. *Die Walküre* develops the more human side of Wotan's character, shews the growth of a finer intellect under the sense of moral responsibility, till it arrives at consciousness of the inexorable fate he has drawn upon himself and all he loves. And in this drama the development is complete. After the words "My work I give up; I will—but the end!" he may be goaded to passion when that will is crossed, but a manly, even an exultant, resignation is the dominant note of the rest of his career.

Hastily perusing the *Ring* poem, Schopenhauer pencilled against the scene with Fricka in act ii of *Die Walküre*, "Wodan under the slipper":* the comment was unworthy alike of philosopher and critic. To his own conscience does Wotan yield, at this turning-point of the drama, and thus obtain a greater victory, the mastery of himself; Fricka has merely torn aside the veil of sophistries with which he had endeavoured to deceive himself;

* In the original (private) edition of 1853 the name of Wotan was spelt with a *d*.

he who rules by the solemn compacts graven on his spear, cannot break them, or connive at their breaking, without breaking it as well. Not to Fricka—whose only thought is for her personal dignity—does Wotan give the oath that dooms the Wälsungen, but to his own self-conviction: "I had hands on Alberich's ring—ran with greed at the gold."* From the instant that he abandons Siegmund the whole edifice of Walhall is tottering to its fall, as Wotan knows to his despair, but at least it shall not fall amid "the *laughter* of men."

Wotan has often been compared with Hamlet and Faust: the comparison is most inadequate. Unlike the Prince of Denmark, he is not the prey of changing moods, ever deferring till tomorrow what should be done to-day if done at all; not revenge is his motive, but the desire to set right a world he *himself* has assisted to put "out of joint." There, again, he differs from Faust; he is the great architect who has laid a bad foundation—no better being available—and eternally strives to shore the quivering building up, till he *wills* that it shall descend with a crash, not slowly crumble. Majestic he is, even in that scene in *Rheingold* where he scoffingly watches the bait thrown to Alberich's vanity; majestic in his terrible outburst after the humiliating scene with Fricka; but never more majestic than when his wrath breaks down in a last embrace of his envied daughter, whom he leaves perforce to a "mortal freer than the god."

A whole volume might be devoted to the character and evolution of Wagner's "Wotan," but, while referring the reader to Mr H. S. Chamberlain's *Richard Wagner* and *Le Drame Wagnérien*,† I must take leave of the engrossing subject with an abridged quotation from a work too little known even in Germany, namely Dr Ernst Meinck's "Legendary Bases":—‡

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* From Mr Alfred Forman's translation (Schott & Co., London).

† A French translation, by the author himself, of *Das Drama Richard Wagner's*; unfortunately no English version of this brilliant contribution to the literature of the subject has yet appeared.

‡ To give the full German title, *Die sagenwissenschaftlichen Grundlagen der Nibelungendichtung Richard Wagner's*; published by Emil Felber, Berlin, 1892. This work is a perfect storehouse of information as to every conceivable myth and legend incorporated in, or substantiating, Wagner's trilogy. Here we see how absolutely true to the old sagas is the seemingly most insignificant detail of the poem, whatever the freedom of application. Meinck

Odin in the Edda has sterling human traits. He is not omniscient, and requires external means to work his wonders. Thus also in Wagner's tetralogy. The poet equips the god with human faults and failings, yet in his Wotan's nature there is nothing mean or feeble ; a great man he remains, with qualities far above the common measure. Schopenhauer has said that the chief reason why poets choose gods and kings for heroes of their dramas, is to attain a greater depth of fall. The foundering of the highest god, the principal hero in Wagner's tetralogy, drags with it the whole gleaming world of gods whose archetype he is. In the Nibelungen-*Lied* it is a struggle of *everyone* with a stupendous common fate ; in the Nibelungen-*Ring* the god *alone* is struggling with a destiny too mighty for him to outrun, and to which he must succumb at last. Entangled in guilt, Wotan comes to the knowledge that even he, the highest of the gods, stands beneath the yoke of Fate, and is powerless against a higher ordering of the world that excepts him no more than the Zeus of victory from a general undoing. For in the old-Germanic religion, as in the Greek, Fate stands an absolute power above and behind the circle of gods ; and Grimm declares it a departure from the oldest conception, to place the controlling of destiny in the hands of the gods. What gives to Wagner's Wotan a tragic character, in contrast to the lofty repose and serene self-sufficiency of the Greek deities, is that deep cleavage of the soul-life which pervades all Germanic mythology : in Wotan's breast dwell two souls, one turned to the life of the senses, the other to high ideals. . . .

Without affecting the human basis of his nature, the manysidedness of Wotan's mythic attributes as god is indicated by countless artistic allusions. In the drama he appears as Storm-god, War-god, Sun-god, Wanderer and Wish [or desire of the Ideal]. . . .

Though the sense of an Original Sin occurs in other pagan religions, and consequently the idea of a terrible ending to the world, it is in the Germanic that the future ending of the gods themselves, or Ragnarok, is plainest expressed ; its apprehension haunts the northern world like a spectre of gloom. . . . When his attempt to save the gods by bringing up a higher individual race of men has failed, with his yielding of Siegmund to death, Wotan is taken with most tragic yearning for

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shews how Wagner has *composed* his story on the *basis* of the ancient myths, how he has digested them and brought them into harmony, not slavishly copying, but re-creating in touch with his 'sources.'—To those unable to read German, on the other hand, Miss Jessie L. Weston's *Legends of the Wagner Drama* (pub. David Nutt, London 1896) may be strongly recommended, though—the space at her disposal for the *Ring* amounting to less than a quarter of that covered by Dr Meinck—a number of most interesting points she has necessarily left undiscussed.

liberation from the inexorable ban that weighs him down. In one respect, at least, he is free : that cataclysm which looms in the background of the ages—he can bring about himself, and prove his true divinity by an action free at last. Of his plenary power, Wotan conquers Fate, forestalling it through his own will.

Wotan will claim our attention again, for a while, when we arrive at the poem of *Rheingold* and the revision of the two *Siegfrieds ;* but *Die Walküre* has so exhausted its author that he needs a little breathing-pause, of which we will take advantage to look round us.

For some time past we have almost lost sight of Liszt. So has Wagner himself ; for he writes in April, " Your letter came as a pleasant surprise, since you have got me quite out of the way of expecting letters from you, so seldom do you write now. Hans, too, has long been owing me an answer." * Since January, when Liszt recorded the sixth performance of *Lohengrin* and proposed the *Dutchman* for " next season," i.e. next year, not a word has he said of a Wagnerian performance at Weimar ; a silence chiefly explicable by the fact that trouble with his eyes had temporarily compelled von Zigesar to delegate the Intendancy to a certain Baron Beaulieu-Marconnay, who " very much hampers Liszt in his grand plans." † April 7 had come Liszt's disappointing news that a shortage of songstresses made *Lohengrin* impossible for some time to come, to which this letter of Wagner's —of the 13th, " in the thick " of his own *Dutchman* rehearsals— somewhat mournfully replies : " It really is a pity that you have not put on Lohengrin again : you were in such good train for it this season ! Alack—so only one performance could be brought about ? There one sees the use of half a year ! " Considering how his own hands were tied, we can scarcely wonder at his

* At the end of January '52 young Bülow writes his father, " With Wagner I am keeping up an intermittent correspondence. . . . I often have to write instead of Liszt, who is excessively busy."

† See Bülow's letter last-cited, where we also read that it was in " the first 4 months of the year " that Liszt mostly devoted his energies to Opera at Weimar, " the grand-ducal birthdays all falling in February and March." On the other hand, it was the custom to grace the chief of these birthdays with a *new* production ; whereas Liszt remarks, about this time, that the performance of one of Wagner's operas was " a gala in itself."

impatience, especially with a work the full score of which was on the eve of publication. May 29 the halt is referred to again, but the completion of the draft of the whole tetralogy, together with the more invigorating air of his retreat, has put its author in a much better humour: "So you're to have Tannhäuser to-morrow? Good luck to you! My compliments to the Lady of all the Russias [in whose honour the work was to be given]. It's to be hoped she will send me an order, or at least travelling-money for Italy, whither I am dying to go. You might tell her so: I hear these people are simply throwing ducats out of the window. But—your not bringing Lohengrin about again for so long really grieves me; this pause is too long. In punishment I shall dedicate the score to you as soon as it appears in print: I'm not going to ask whether you accept or not—for punished you must be!" There you have the whole Richard Wagner: he has only just finished the sketch of the most tragic of all his dramas, and the "punishment-motive" at once is adopted for a kindly joke; his favourite mode of stretching his mental limbs, "not a serious word more!"

Another aspect of the Wagner-Liszt relations is revealed by the incidental correspondence anent the Weimar production of Berlioz' *Benvenuto Cellini* (March 20, '52). Liszt remarks in his letter of April 7, "Why Cellini at Weimar? is a question I am not bound to answer to everybody, but which will resolve itself in a practical way that may satisfy *us*.—I believe you will agree with me later, unless you are bent on aiming at the air." What Liszt can have proposed as a "practical" issue (for Wagner and himself) of the production of Berlioz' early, and at that time only opera, it is difficult to divine: had it not been for a letter of next October in which he casts his vote against any such enterprise, we might have imagined it to be meant as a douceur to open to Wagner the adamantine gates of Paris. In no other way could this resurrection of an operatic failure advance the cause of musical *drama*, as understood by Wagner; for Liszt's own present pupil, Hans von Bülow, had just publicly expressed his opinion that "'Cellini' is no dramatic artwork in the higher sense; rather is it merely the dramatic study of a musical genius." * — To

* Bülow's article, dated "March 26, 1852," appeared in the *Neue Zeitschrift* of April 2 and 30 (reprinted among his *Ausgewählte Schriften* 1896), and a very valuable piece of criticism it is. In its second instalment the

Wagner the whole thing was a mystification: "Whatever can have come to your ears about me and your production of 'Cellini'? You appear to presuppose a hostile attitude on my part! That error I should like to rid you of.—I regard this undertaking of yours as a purely personal matter, inspired by your penchant for Berlioz: what a pig I should be, were I to snuffle at that penchant, or that undertaking. If everyone would follow the inner promptings of his heart like you; or better, if everybody had a heart like yours for such promptings, things would soon be altered! In this affair, again, I can but rejoice at you. Only, from the moment such an affair of the heart is to be ratified by the speculative understanding, I can but find that errors creep in, which a third person may clearly see to be such. In the consequences which you attach to the production of Cellini, as I am told [manifestly by Bülow], I am unable thoroughly to believe: that is all. Can this unbelief of mine, however, change a jot in my opinion of your action? Not in the least. With my whole heart I say, you have done right, and only wish I could say as much to many others!"

It is pleasant to find this entire absence of jealousy in a letter that proceeds (as already quoted) to deplore the ominous pause with *Lohengrin;* but Wagner never was jealous of favours shewn to other artists, only of the higher cause of art, and the *Cellini* episode leads to quite a passionate endeavour to induce Berlioz to enter the lists as his rival: "If I'm not mistaken, this work is over 12 years old: in the interval has Berlioz not developed far enough to turn out something wholly different? . . . He will never put this Cellini on its legs; but which of the twain is the more important—Cellini, or Berlioz? So let the former be, and

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verdict quoted above is thus amplified: "When we said 'Benvenuto Cellini' was *no artwork in the higher sense*, we meant that as an artwork it is too *imperfect*, and too much of a failure in its totality, to satisfy the *public of the future;* too *noble* and too *intellectual* (geistvoll) to be sympathetic to the *public of the present*." He attributes the imperfection to the text, apropos of which we have one of his wittiest sallies: "Not but that the libretto of 'Cellini' coupled with music à la Flotow, for instance, would have received the utmost applause; Flotow's principle of *expressing through music a degree of vulgarity unattainable by mere words* would have thrown a veil of indulgence over the weakness of the plot," and so on. Acting on Bülow's suggestion (or rather, on part of it), Liszt presently induced Berlioz to make a considerable cut in his opera, reducing it from four acts to three.

help the latter!—For heaven's sake let him write *a new* opera. One thing alone can save him: the Drama. . . . Believe me—I *love* Berlioz, however mistrustfully and obstinately he holds aloof from me: he does not know me—but I know *him*. If there is one man I expect something of, it is Berlioz. . . . But he needs a poet who shall fill him through and through, *compel* him for very delight, be to him what man is to woman. With sorrow do I see an artist gifted beyond all measure thus perishing of his egoistic solitude.* Cannot I help him?" (to L., Sept. 8, '52). So Wagner offers him, through Liszt, that *Wieland* which had been the very apple of his eye when he himself was seriously thinking of composing an opera for Paris. Berlioz would have none of it: perhaps Liszt was right, that "the Parisians would not relish it"; but neither did they relish the operas Berlioz actually composed thereafter, and this *Wieland*, with its splendid opening for vivid colour and imaginative treatment, might have furnished Berlioz with his unique chance of turning out a really successful musical drama.

In connection with *Cellini* there is a curiosity to record, the first theatrical occasion on which plums were picked from Wagner's operas to furnish forth a gala-night. Liszt confesses to it with a blush in the middle of May, explaining that *Tannhäuser* had been announced in honour of Tsar Nicholas, but the chief singers being "unable to sing a note," no entire opera could be given: "I therefore coolly took the first act of Tannhäuser, to the end of the Pilgrims' Chorus (close in G natural)—began again in G with the third act of Lohengrin, after a pause, and

* Cf. *Autobiographic Sketch* (*P.* I. 15), "He stands completely isolated," and so on. The full text of a letter of Wagner's to Siegfried Lehrs of April 7, 1843, partially cited in our vol. ii, has since been published in the *Bayreuther Blätter* (1902, No. VII.), where we read: "You reproach me with my outspokenness concerning Berlioz etc. in my autobiography? In the first place I must tell you that what I wrote was not intended for the press: it was meant as a sketch to be used by my biographer; that he might know how to deal with me, I stripped myself bare. I myself was surprised that my actual words should have been reproduced in print. For that matter, why should I make any ceremony about Berlioz? He certainly does not deserve it from me, as he has proved here in Dresden, where it was an abhorrence to him to witness the success of my operas. He is an unfortunate man, however, against whom I assuredly would have written nothing if I had first attended the concerts he gave here:—I felt truly sorry for him."

went through the act to the end of the duet—finishing up with the Roman Carnival overture and second act of Benvenuto Cellini." It gives one a shudder at first; but the intention was good, and, when one reflects a little, the only difference between the scheme and that of a modern "Wagner concert" lay in the presence of scenery and costumes. Under the circumstances it was hardly the "crime" Liszt apologetically calls it, and Wagner mildly passes it by with the merest twitching of the lips: "Hans had told me nothing of the Imperial-Russian-Tannhäuser-Lohengrin-Cellini-theatre-programme." *Tannhäuser* itself, on the other hand, is in a transitional phase just now at Weimar, and the bulk of Wagner's letter of May 29 is devoted to instructions for its restoration to integrity; thus actively is he forced to occupy himself with his earlier works at the very time he is engaged on his *Nibelung* poem—how actively, we shall realise better next chapter.

The Weimar theatre not being in a particularly satisfactory state this season, Liszt suddenly bethinks him of another mode of serving his friend: in April he asks Wagner for "any special suggestions with regard to the *Liebesmahl der Apostel*,* as I think of getting it performed in course of this summer," adding that the *Faust*-overture will be given at the next concert of a local singing-union. Apart from *Rienzi* and its submerged predecessors, those were the only two Wagnerian works remaining for him to adventure, now that the *Holländer* was set down for next season. The manuscript score of the *Faust*-overture had been in his keeping since the beginning of '49, apparently forgotten; so that we may fairly credit young Bülow with its fishing up. Its Weimar performance came duly off at a concert of the Montag'scher Singverein on May the 11th, '52; its first

* Liszt's memory, as we already have heard him confess, was not particularly good; for Wagner had written him Jan. 30, "Bülow tells me that it is proposed to give my 'Liebesmahl der Apostel,' on occasion, at Weimar. I would have you remark that I reckoned the orchestration of this work for a very large building (the Frauenkirche in Dresden) and a chorus of 1000 men. For a smaller hall and choir the brass would therefore have to be reduced to the ordinary dimensions, 2 trumpets instead of 4, and so on. The reduction would present no great difficulties, and Bülow will certainly do it quite well, if I ask him." This constant fear of too much "brass" is an amusing refutation of the catchword that the composer's *later* works are "so noisy."

performance anywhere since the virtual failure in Dresden eight years before.* "Your Faust-overture went well, and made a sensation"—† writes Liszt—"Fare you right well, and get to your Siegfried"; an admonition that would reach Wagner at the moment when he was preparing the way for the youngster's conception. As to the *Liebesmahl*, Liszt's previous inquiry is now explained: "Presumably you have heard of the Ballenstedt musical festival with the Tannhäuser-overture and Liebesmahl der Apostel." Wagner had not heard, but is unboundedly grateful: "So I'm to parade at a music-festival too? People say I'm a man '*made*' famous; if that be true, come, who has been the maker? . . . It really is incomprehensible to me, that none of our numberless male-vocal festivals have ever done the 'Liebesmahl der Apostel'! Yet, what else is not incomprehensible to me, and yet so comprehensible?" (May 29)—Schladebach, as we saw in vol. ii, had done his worst to make it both.

The Ballenstedt festival was a more or less impromptu affair, yet of importance not only for Wagner, but also for Bülow, each of whom then made his first appearance, the one in spirit, the other in body, at any function of the kind. A picturesque little town on the fringe of the Lower Harz, Ballenstedt was at that time the Residenz of the Duke of Anhalt-Bernburg, whose court-band was lent for this occasion, though the "festival" was a private (and financially unsuccessful) speculation of a local hotel-keeper. Besides the Bernburg band, there was that of Sondershausen, and the best part of the Weimar Kapelle. As for the choir, one of the conditions made by Liszt had been that Stern's vocal union from Berlin should be engaged, to which both parties had consented; yet—and this shews the

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* Not till the winter of 1854-5 was the *Faust*-overture revised and brought into its present form, though Wagner (for the second time) asks for the score back in Sept. '52, with a view to "retouching it a little," in the hope of getting it published; whereupon Liszt returns it with the remark, "We have a copy of it here, and I shall probably repeat it this winter. The work is quite worthy of you—yet I would suggest" certain changes, to which Wagner could not see his way (Letters 86 and 88 in the Correspondence).

† The following is the programme of Liszt's concert:—Bach's cantata "Ein feste Burg": Mendelssohn's 114th Psalm; Wagner's *Faust*-overture; Angels' Chorus by Liszt from Goethe's *Faust* (Part II.), "Rosen ihr blendenden"; "Faust's Verklärung" from Schumann's *Faust*—see J. van Santen Kolff's article in the *Bayr. Bl.* 1894.

sort of opposition which alike Liszt and Wagner had to deal with throughout, but the average English reviewer till to-day declines to believe—at the last moment Stern's people refused to come, in consequence of a derogatorily spiteful notice in the press. Our old acquaintance Schneider, too, had promised his band from Dessau; but, since Liszt would neither devote a portion of the programme to that never-ending *Last Judgment*, nor share the conductor's baton with him, Herr Schneider made the individual members of his band send a round-robin of regret. Bülow himself, in a letter to his father of June 28, '52, is our authority for this revelation of musicianly paltriness. However, as he further states, one or two neighbouring choral unions were joined "imprimis by the Leipzig students' vocal club, the Pauliner, 60 in number, all with fine fresh voices. Robert Franz had also brought a troop of 30 ladies and gentlemen from Halle; and we had a few individual Berliners and Leipzigers. . . . Liszt really worked wonders. In three days' rehearsal everything went swimmingly, and the choir and orchestra (together about 300 persons) behaved as if they belonged to *one* establishment, instead of being strangers to each other; Liszt's personality as conductor had inspired and carried everyone away. The audience, however, amounted to but 800-1000." Liszt speaks of the chorus as "about 120," but Bülow's figures are more probably correct, especially as he acted as "musical adjutant" and had to help in rehearsing the *Liebesmahl*. Of course the volume of sound cannot have been nearly so imposing as that obtained by Wagner at the only previous performance of this Biblical Scene (in 1843—see vol. ii, p. 28), but Liszt reports, "the whole went admirably. I was truly delighted with this splendid work, and mean to repeat it on the first good opportunity." As the harpist Rosalie Spohr, niece of Wagner's old protector, was not well enough to help in the manner proposed by the composer, von Bülow gave the requisite support to the unaccompanied choruses, in the matter of pitch, by an occasional chord on the piano. Nor was it his only subsidiary contribution to the ensemble: "In Raff's overture I beat the big drum, but am almost angry to hear that Meyerbeer once rendered Cherubini the same service in one of his operas."

The Ballenstedt was a two-days festival, with the following

programme:—June 22—*Tannhäuser* overture; duet from the *Holländer*, Herr and Frau von Milde (of Weimar); harp-fantasia on *Oberon* (omitted); "Die Macht der Musik," soprano solo with orchestral accompaniment by Liszt, Frau v. Milde; Beethoven's Choral Fantasia, Bülow at the pianoforte; scena from Gluck's *Orpheus*, Frl. F. Schreck; Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.

June 23—Raff's *King Alfred* overture; Wagner's *Liebesmahl;* Berlioz' *Harold* Symphony; Mendelssohn's *Walpurgis Night.* An immense amount to rehearse in three days; in fact, the first and last movements of the *Harold* Symphony had to be sacrificed to pressure of time. "On the other hand," says Bülow, whose own great success had completely reconciled him with his mother, "the Tannhäuser-overture was repeated after the Walpurgis Night, by lively desire, thus forming the first and last link in the chain. The effect was enormous. Liszt, who was received both times with Tusch and cheers, had all their nosegays thrown him by the ladies present." If Mendelssohn was listening from the world above, he must have been no little astonished at the jubilation over that once-maltreated overture immediately after a work of his own. But, as Liszt says, "the duet from the Flying Dutchman found very great favour, and the Tannhäuser-overture—repeated by desire on the second day, at the close of the festival—went brilliantly; orchestra and audience were unanimous in their enthusiasm, and will be everywhere, given an adequate rendering." That constituted the difference.

Determined that his friend's light should not be left under a bushel, Liszt took the same measures to spread it as with the *Lohengrin* production: "You will find circumstantial accounts of the festival in Brendel's *Neue Zeitschrift* (Brendel himself was at Ballenstedt), the *Signale*, *Rheinische Musikztg* and Berlin *Echo.*" Raff, who had conducted all the preliminary arrangements, was apparently assigned the *Echo;* R. Franz enlightened the *Signale;* young Bülow undertook the *Rheinische*, and discovered for himself how difficult it is to write a soberly eulogistic report of a concert (see his letter to Liszt of July 4). Hans also wrote Wagner "a very long letter, not omitting the smallest incident of the festival that might interest him." It is evidently to this private report that Wagner refers in Letter 81 of his Correspondence with Liszt (inferentially July 9): "A thousand thanks for all you have just done for my works again: it has been impossible for me to read the report on

the Ballenstedt festival without the greatest emotion. Through these performances you assuredly have won me many friends again; and never can I doubt that, if I still pull through, it will have been your work alone!"

Those words of Wagner's, and still more their public confirmation in the full score of *Lohengrin*—which appeared in print a few weeks later—seem to have struck a more affectionately responsive chord in Liszt's breast than any yet sounded. Almost of a sudden his letters begin to expand, in every sense of the word. Perhaps the change may be dated from his performance, i.e. first hearing, of the *Faust*-overture; perhaps from the news that Wagner really was not idling, but actively engaged on his herculean task of calling the tetralogy to life: in any case, the last veil appears torn from Liszt's eyes, and his friend receives from him henceforth the fullest and most cordial sympathy alike as man and artist. Even a comparison of the number of letters exchanged in two consecutive years will shew this. To take Wagner's birthday as a convenient landmark, from that of 1851 to that of 1852 he receives but six letters from Liszt,* against nine of his own, to say nothing of the much greater length and open-heartedness of the latter; but between May 22, 1852, and the same date in 1853, we find that Liszt's letters have doubled to twelve (against 21 of his friend's, it is true), while their individual length has much increased and the writer now 'lets himself go,' as if a previous check — whether self-imposed, or imposed by another —had been removed from him.

The dedication of *Lohengrin* most touchingly rounds off the tribute paid by Wagner to his friend at the end of the *Communication* (1851). Such a "punishment" must have been sweet indeed. Written at the very time its author was fretting at the "too long" silence of his opera at Weimar—for it is dated "Zurich, May 1852"—it dwells on nothing but the unexampled boon conferred: "It was you who woke the silent pen-strokes of this score

* We cannot reckon letters written by Bülow at Liszt's request as the equivalent of personal communications; in such a friendship they would rather suggest a shade of condescension on the one side, however little intended. To us, on the other hand, the Wagner-Bülow letters of these early years would prove immensely interesting, and it is to be hoped we may some day have more of them than the two or three already published in the *Bayreuther Blätter*.

to light and ringing life; without your rare affection my work would still lie motionless and dumb—perchance forgotten in some chest among my lumber. . . . That beautiful act of a friend's devotion, which raised what I had merely willed to actual deed, won many a new friend to me. . . . So may the triumphs of your energy be a guide and example to all who find it in their power to love me! As such I therefore introduce you to them, by dedicating to yourself my work in presence of the world." *

The terms of this dedication would not be made known to Liszt until it appeared in print, with the publication of the score (Breitkopf und Härtel, mid-August 1852). With his blushes fresh upon him, he writes Wagner, Aug. 23: "Rest assured that it is a life-task to me, to be worthy of your friendship. The little I have hitherto been able to do for *you*, and therewith for the honour of art, has its good side mainly in that it has strengthened me to do still better and more decisively for your works in the future. . . . Should you not be back in Germany by the time the score of your tetralogy is finished, I will bestir myself in every possible way for the production of your work. If Weimar prove too small and indigent, we'll try for somewhere else; and what though every string should snap, we still can go on harping till a music-festival or drama-festival—or whatever the thing may be finally called—a feast such as had never been heard of, shall be organised at some fine place, and your Nibelungen leave the stocks." Having incidentally spoken of Raff's *König Alfred* as "the most talented score of any German composer's for the past ten years," Liszt hastens to add: "Naturally I do not reckon you among them—you stand alone, and are to be compared with no one but yourself." And next October: "My sympathy with you and admiration of your divine genius are too earnest and deep, for me to misconstrue the necessary consequences of your premises. You cannot and must not be other than what you are; and thus do I honour, comprehend and love you, with all my soul." So demonstrative had Liszt never yet been, in his letters to Wagner; we therefore may claim the year of the completion of the *Ring* poem as the seal set at last on their friendship.

Yet Liszt had paid Zurich no visit. "It is not *my* fault, that I could not fly to your Flying Dutchman," he had written in May,

* For the full text see Appendix. 566

after Wagner's suggestion that the inscenation for a small stage "perhaps might interest" him, who had never seen the opera he already had booked for Weimar. In reply, too, to something far more cordial: "Are you no longer in a position to make this madcap journey? I'm sure you can—if you will! How you would rejoice at the joy your visit would give me! Nothing else could make that up to you!" Ah! yes; it was *not* Liszt's fault. He offers no explanation, for that had been forestalled in Wagner's question: no longer could he take a journey without the leave of his princess. "Aren't you going to take any outing at all this year?"—asks Wagner at the end of May—"What becomes of the rendezvous you gave me a prospect of, as long ago as last summer? Are we never to see one another again?" Liszt's lips are still shut, upon that point. At last, when the summer has waned into autumn, and the exile has uttered that plaintive cry, "I live so far from my absent friends that a thousand fears at times possess me, especially when I receive no news for long," Liszt ventures a *hope* that he may visit Zurich next summer, if he can ("*einmal*"). It is not enough for Wagner; he must have a definite pledge: "If all fruit fails, you *must* do one thing—arrange for us to see each other next summer [of '53]. Reflect, that this is a *necessity*—that it absolutely *must* be, and not even a god durst hinder you from coming to me, since the police (a profound bow!) prevent me from coming to you!—Promise me in your next letter that you will come for positively certain. Promise it me!—Then we will see how I can hold out till then!!" That is November 9, '52: not till six weeks have elapsed, is Liszt—permitted to answer in the affirmative. A carefully veiled allusion, to vexations he has to bear, allows us to guess the struggle it has cost him to obtain his goddess' leave to quit her for a fortnight six months thence; but the promise is solemnly given (and kept): "In the course of next summer I will visit you (probably in June), though I cannot stay long in Zurich, whither nothing else attracts me save yourself. . . . So auf Wiedersehen, at last, in a few months.—With joy do I think of that moment. My pen is growing blunt with writing you.—A single chord will bring us nearer to each other, than any amount of phrases" (Dec. 27).

If Liszt could not join his comrade in the summer of 1852, at east he helped him to a holiday. In the middle of June, half-

way through the *Walküre* poem, Wagner had written: "When I have finished it, a change will be of the utmost necessity to me. I need the recreation of a journey, and above all should not wish to end my last poetic work, the long prologue, here, where the monotony of the surroundings oppresses me and tiresome visits mostly put me out of humour. I must get to the Alps, and should like at least to skim the borders of Italy and make a tiny halt there." His little annuity from the Ritters would not admit of it, especially after the hole made by the Zurich *Dutchman;* so he asks Liszt to procure him an advance on the very modest fee of 20 to 25 louis d'or he expects from the Weimar *Dutchman.** Liszt sends 100 thalers, evidently from his own pocket, though he considerately says nothing about the source; and Wagner jocosely observes to Uhlig, "I'm travelling on the Holländer-honorarium; every day costs me one number of the opera—20 francs."

It is characteristic, that this longing to extend his physical horizon, to leave his cage awhile, should have come over Wagner with the girding of his loins for his world-drama. In that dismal Spring of 1850, it is true, he was thinking of Greece; but to bury his despair where no one knew him. Since then he had quietly submitted to an outwardly humdrum existence, with but one break, imprisonment in a hydro. Now, with the *Ring* in his brain—the plan for which he brought back with him from that water-cure—the circuit of Zurich grows too small for him; he must up, with his Valkyrie, to the top of the mountains; and over them, over them speeds his wish, like his Siegfried longing to be free of the cramping wood. From Pallanza, on his trip, he writes to Wesendonck, "To-day I find *rest* at last. Hitherto I had always been as tho' in chase of it: the most majestic world of Alps to me seemed but the gate through which I needs must pass, to taste delight. With a true sense of bliss I now look across the lake to the plains! Yes, there is the world that yet might yield me sweet impressions."

Singular, that so impressionable a brain had not earlier felt that stern oppression, that sense of crushedness, which the

* A few months later Tichatschek is offered exactly double, "50 louis d'or, a thing unheard of at Weimar," to sing Lohengrin *once*—see Liszt's letter of Dec. 27; but Liszt had no hand in the finances of the theatre.

fencing-round with snow-clad heights invariably brings to those accustomed to the kindlier lines of gently-swelling hills or plains. This Spring of 1852, however, the feeling has obsessed him: March 11 he writes, "We're having brilliant sunshine everyday now, and my mood is somewhat brightening.—Ah! if I could make a fine journey this summer, to Italy!" A month later (Apr. 9), "We are having fabulously fine weather here: I would give anything to fly away this summer, as far as Italy." Four days after that we have the "fine Spring weather" inspiring him with the wish to be anchored in the bay of Naples or Andalusia, the same letter (to Liszt) containing the serio-comic passage: "Ah! if I could only make a fine journey this summer, for once and at last! If I only knew how to set about it!—that sigh is always answered by my voice's echo from a wall of leather drawn around me. This craving for travel is so strong upon me, that already it has inspired me with homicidally burglarious designs on Rothschild & Co. We sessile animals do not really deserve to be human at all: what could we not enjoy, if we did not eternally bring ourselves as sacrifice to the accursed organ of sitting? That sitting-implement is the virtual legislator over the whole race of civilised mankind: we're to sit, forsooth, at most stand, but never move, to say nothing of running. Well, my hero is the 'mettled runner Achilles'; rather run to death, than sit oneself ill."

Probably Herwegh, who had recently come thence, was primarily responsible for this "*schwärmen* after Italy,"—as Wagner terms it in his playful suggestion that the Empress of Russia might do worse than fling him the wherewithal (May 29). But entire change of scene was also a physical necessity: "The nerves of my brain are so overwrought that even these few lines set me in violent commotion," he tells Liszt on the day before starting. "I find I may still be able to do something good, but only on condition that I keep a strict watch on myself, and especially that I interrupt my work often and completely divert my thoughts before going on again." Liszt is quite of his opinion: "I am delighted that you treated yourself to this journey. They are glorious company, those glaciers"; for Liszt had more practical sympathy with an artist's needs than the philistines who composed that "wall of leather" which had absorbed the last vibrations of the *Flying Dutchman* without

transforming them into the only philistine equivalent—the chink of coin.

The day on which Wagner set out, he was to have acted as judge at a vocal competition at Basle. He had tried to avoid them, but the tiresome people, like many another unbidden guest, had tracked him to the "Rinderknecht" and extorted a sort of promise. Of sheer mercy to his nerves, he has cancelled the engagement: "I can't stand that *buzz* just now," he expresses it to Uhlig, whilst to Wesendonck he speaks still more uncomplimentarily of "the Basle drinkers' feast" on which he had turned his back, "tired out and in ill-humour." If he expected to recuperate through a series of forced marches, he was soon to discover his mistake; for his letters written on this miniature tour are a mixture of delight with the beauties of Nature and profound dissatisfaction with his physical state.

Starting July 10, he begins with the Bernese Oberland, and climbs the Faulhorn and Sidelhorn. From Meiringen he writes Uhlig on the 15th: "Yesterday I came down from the Faulhorn, 8261 feet high"—which looks as if he were not above consulting Baedeker. "There I had a sublime view of the terrible mountain-world of ice and snow and glacier, which seems to lie so close that one might clutch it.—I am walking capitally, quite strong on my legs; only I'm not contented with my head as yet. The nerves of my brain are hideously out of order: agitation or prostration—never any true repose! Perhaps 'twill never be much better with me. No cure in the world can avail where one thing alone could help me: that I should be another man." A week later, "My head is quite dizzy from the journey—and particularly the heat," but it does not prevent him from giving Uhlig, "out of sheer good-nature," a most graphic description:—

"The gem of my trip was my march over the Gries glacier from Wallis through the Formazza valley to Domo d'Ossola, which occupied two days. The Gries is a stupendously savage glacier-pass, very dangerous, and crossed but seldom from the Haslithal or Wallis by peasants fetching southern wares (rice etc.) from Italy. For the first time on my journey, the top of the pass (over 8000 feet) was covered with mist, so that my guide had all his work cut out to strike a path over the freezing walls of snow and rock. But the descent! down from grisliest ice-tracks step by step, over hollow after hollow, through the

whole range of northern Europe's vegetation, into the opulence of Italy! It was positively intoxicating, and I laughed like a child as I passed from chesnut-forests into meadows, eh! corn-fields, absolutely covered-in by roofs of vine; something like our verandahs, only stretched over acres, with every growing thing beneath that soil can bear. And then the endless multiformity of hill and dale, with the utmost grace of tilth, pretty stone-houses, and—so far as the valley—a handsome breed of men."

His humour has not deserted him, though his head be at once racked and in raptures: "My first Italian conversation was divine. For the life of me I couldn't think of the Italian for *milk;* the word never occurs, you know, in any of the operas from which I had picked up all my knowledge of the tongue." But the allusion has its serious side, for three months later we find him saying: "My digestion has been in a very bad way of late, and chiefly owing to that cursed *milk*-drinking. I now share the conviction of those who look upon milk-diet as folly. Milk is the food of *sucklings*, and then warm from the mother's breast; but every grown-up baby feeds itself on more developed matter. No animal drinks *cold* milk [evidently he owned no cat], neither does any human in a state of nature: the herdsmen in the alps eat cheese, and drink a fermented preparation of milk. How can we be so idiotic as to impose on the same stomach which has to deal with nothing but prepared foods (the meat itself cooked) this entirely unmediated substance? [Salads and fruit are forgotten.] And we, to boot, with our prodigiously-increased nerve-activity and the whole manner of our life!" The last point is the crux of the argument, not only against this, but against all so-called "natural" diets.—Another dietary item is imparted to Uhlig during the tour itself: "An interesting note; on the Faulhorn I ate roast chamois, in the Formazzathal roast marmot"; to which is added the sly quip, "I don't know if Rausse forbids them both. You must look it up."—And yet another ironical allusion to his present experiences: "I have already written to have Brendel asked if he could do with letters from me on the formation of alps. By thunder! what articles the *Zeitschrift* should contain, if it had the remotest idea of its misson!"

We have left our traveller on the borders of the Swiss-Italian lakes. It was on the 19th of July that he trudged adown the

Formazzathal to Domodossola, whence he drove the same evening to Baveno: "That drive crowned the day; I felt in perfect bliss as I emerged at last from the wild into the wholly lovely." "I have laughed like a child over the wonders so often described and read, but never yet seen and tasted by me. The effect upon me of the Italian air is indescribable: how I have felt with so ever-smiling a sky!"—he says in his first letter to Wesendonck, written July 20 at Pallanza, where "I am sitting by the Lago Maggiore, smoking the first of your cigars of the gods upon my journey." Not a great smoker, then, however addicted to snuff; for he had been ten days absent from home.

On his way to Locarno, the same day, he has a rude awakening from his dreams by "the human canaille again. On the steamboat—crowded with Italian philistines—poor fowls and ducks, cooped up for transport, were so atrociously tortured and left to the cruelest privations, that the shocking unfeelingness of men who had this sight continually before their eyes filled me once more with furious anger. To know that one would simply be laughed at, if one attempted to interfere!!" It was not his first experience of the tourist element, apparently, for he had written from Meiringen (also to U.), "How those canaille of men have enraged me, on this journey, amid the wonders of Nature. I am always having to draw back from them in disgust, and yet—I so long for human beings. But this pack of scoundrels! Devil take them!!" Arrived at Lugano on the 21st, he writes next day: "Here it is divine again; but my loneliness plagues me terribly. Herwegh has worries of his own, and never came; so I have written my wife, begging her to come with Peps." The same complaint of solitude had been made to Wesendonck: "I should like to return here [Pallanza] with somebody. I must get my wife to come and join me. Gladly would I have everybody I am fond of by my side just now: would that you could come too!" Minna, not much of a walker, had not been reckoned in the original viaticum of £15; so Sulzer has to advance 25 louis on the Frankfort fee for *Tannhäuser* (see next chapter). *Two* operas are thus converted into travelling-money, one for the husband, the other for the wife; whilst the dog forms a welcome relief to the tortured poultry on the steamboat.

Presumably Richard spent three or four days at this halting-place, in waiting for Minna, and here he may therefore have

worked a little at the poem of *Das Rheingold;* for, a week before starting, he had told Uhlig: "I think of tarrying awhile at Lugano, which is said to be heavenly. Perhaps I shall put the long prologue to my dramas into verse there." Certainly on the day after his arrival he tells the same confidant, "I don't think of setting to work again just yet: my head—particularly with this heat—refuses to exalt itself for any length of time as yet"; but the "*auf die Dauer*" rather suggests a faint attempt at work already, and in the solitude of the next couple of days we may picture the first scene of the Rhine-daughters taking rhythmical shape as its author sat plunged in reverie beside the waters of that exquisite lake, or rowed to where its sinuous shores drop sheer as far as eye can see beneath the mirror of its surface. Of the beginning of *this* poem, however, we have no recorded date, and Minna's arrival would in any case cut short the inspiration. The holiday was fully half over, and steps must be partly retraced: "I got Minna to meet me at Lugano. With her the Lago Maggiore once again, via Domo d'Ossola, Wallis, Martigny, to Chamounix, Mer de Glace etc. [Minna presumably in a chaise-à-porteur]—to Geneva. From here we go home by Lausanne" (to U., Aug. 3).

So the trip is finished. Luckily Minna has enjoyed it, though it has done her husband little good: "I was glad that it pleased my good wife very much. I, too, felt no more pain, merely wonder that I still must live." "Almost four weeks did I spend on a journey, the prospect of which had rejoiced me as the realisation of a beautiful dream," he writes Uhlig, Aug. 9. "Many a separate fine impression I enjoyed; yet was I ever in quest of the right one, and—peace I did not find. It is all up; there's no youth left in me: *to live* stands no longer before me; all my making and doing can now be naught but gradual decay." In dejection so deep—"the nerves of my brain, there's the trouble!" he cries in this letter—it was useless to think of another long poem, such as the *Rheingold.*

Had he been in the best of health, moreover, creative activity must have ceased for a few weeks; there were arrears of business awaiting him at Zurich. Almost suddenly, like a thief in the night, the German theatres had begun to thumb his scores. So Wotan must stand back for a month or two, while we follow the fortunes of *Tannhäuser.*

VIII.

CIRCULATION AT LAST.

Previous stagnation.—Roeckel's sister advocating Tannhäuser, *little Schwerin follows Weimar and sets the ball rolling.—Niggardly fees; "hailstorm of scores."—Old defects at Dresden and Weimar prompt "Tannhäuser-guide"; Tichatschek's chagrin.—Contents of the brochure; effect on various conductors.—Wiesbaden success; the Leipzig "crew."—First act of Berlin farce.—Court-theatres and "Self-composing Kapellmeisters."—Middle-size cities; Breslau success.—Fétis delivers battle; Belloni urges another invasion of Paris; Liszt dissuades.—Dresden revives the opera; the King's intentions? Wagner's indifference; his prohibition of* Lohengrin.—*Richard Pohl a recruit.—Weimar "restores"* Tannhäuser.—"*I'm glad to see none of these performances.*"

> *These philistines haven't the remotest idea of the nature and future of my works.*
>
> *This concernment with art* par distance *will be the death of me.*
>
> R. Wagner (to Uhlig, autumn 1852).

In this memorable 1852, the fortieth year of Wagner's life, a sudden change had come over the attitude of the German theatres towards his operas; a change whose principal cause is not so far to seek. While the composer remained at Dresden, an active object of the jealousy not only of his colleague Reissiger, but also of the two opposing camps outside, Berlin and Leipzig, scarcely any save the most derogatory criticisms had found their way into the press: a ring-fence had been erected round his works. Now Liszt and his Weimar friends had broken a gap in that fence on one side; Wagner himself by his essays, and faithful Uhlig through the *Neue Zeitschrift*, had broken a gap on the other.

The lapse of time, alone, will not explain the transformation. *Tannhäuser*, for instance, was not a bar more in advance of its age in 1845 than in 1852; nothing but insulation by imperilled interests could have prevented its unquestionable outward success at Dresden from acting as a magnet to any director of the smallest enterprise. That success had been sedulously falsified by newspapers taking their cue from—to spare the feelings of worshippers at other shrines, we will merely say Schladebach. Had Wagner but experienced fair play, that publication-venture of his should by now have brought him in a revenue sufficient to let him snap his fingers at the world, and work away in peace at new creations. The petty spite of Dresden, Leipzig and Berlin, most certainly deprived posterity of a round half-dozen operas of at least the rank of *Lohengrin*. Whether the *Ring* would have been conceived and carried out, in more prosperous circumstances, is another question. Who can tell?

The hands of the clock we cannot put back, but to count the productions of Wagner's operas to the end of 1851 will not take us five minutes, even though we begin the other side of the beginning:—

1) *Die Feen* had never been performed at all, though announced in 1834 as shortly to be mounted at Leipzig (vol. i, pp. 170 *et seq*). 2) *Das Liebesverbot* was performed once, atrociously, at Magdeburg in 1836; Wagner's birthplace, Leipzig again, declined it for very prudery, just as it declared the *Holländer* unsuited for Germany in 1841. 3) *Rienzi* had a brilliant success in Dresden 1842, and maintained its popularity to the end of 1848, when it was suddenly dropped for political reasons. Only *three* other cities attempted it, namely Hamburg 1844, Königsberg 1845, and Berlin 1847. How many, or rather, how few times it was given in the two former places we cannot ascertain; but it seems to have faded out quite soon through inadequacy of treatment. As to Berlin, we know that *Rienzi* vanished from its stage in 1848, after eight performances. 4) *Der fliegende Holländer*, produced at Dresden with fair success Jan. 2, 1843, survived no more than four representations there. Given at Riga and Cassel a few months later, it disappeared from Riga with its fifth performance; at Cassel it cannot have enjoyed much longer life, despite Spohr's patronage, for the Elector evidently did not like it (vol. ii, 152). Berlin gave it four times, early in 1844, and then suppressed it.

One or two other cities, including Leipzig, commenced negotiations, but dropped them. 5) *Tannhäuser:* nineteen performances at Dresden, 1845 to 1848,—then not a single representation of any of Wagner's works till the date at which we have arrived. Weimar *alone* had followed suit, Feb. 49, and still gave the opera at intervals, always to full houses. 6) *Lohengrin*, stillborn in Dresden, and so far the exclusive appanage of Weimar, had required over two years to attain its sixth performance.

In view of this stagnation hitherto, it is startling to find the summer and autumn of 1852 characterised by a really clamorous demand for the *Tannhäuser* score, and a demand that in the majority of cases meant speedy performance. The exceptions, notable as they are, I will reserve till later. Let us first take the positive history, in which it will be observed that, reversing the general order of things, circulation began with the extremities long before it reached the trunk: as Wagner himself desired with art, it grew from below upwards, was not "imposed from above"; and therein lay its surety of endurance. Dresden had done nothing direct for the spread of the work: had its author not been Kapellmeister loci, from whom a new opera was officially expected from time to time, in all probability it would never have seen the light there. From the end of 1848 the Saxon capital did worse than nothing: it gave our hero's operas the look of failure, or at least of superannuation, by total silence. The effectual start was therefore made with little Weimar in 1849, followed by the literary activity of a sower so obscure as Uhlig.

The seed took some time to germinate; over two years. Early in 1851, as you may remember (195 *ant.*), conductor Schmidt had inquired of Liszt about *Tannhäuser*, which the Frankfort theatre "desired to give in April"; but the offer did not even get so far as Wagner's ears till that July, after which it perished of anæmia. The first to follow the example of little Weimar in real earnest was slightly bigger but less famous Schwerin; and here we have the salutary influence of artist-friends quite visibly at work, that army of mice which gradually gnawed through the lion's net. In August 51, a fortnight after Uhlig has finished his visit to Zurich, Wagner writes him: "I have just had an inquiry from Bote und Bock, of Berlin, for the price of my Tannhäuser, which the Schwerin theatre wishes to perform. I was perfectly amazed; but Schwerin, Schwerin kept running in my head till at last it occurred to me

that *Roeckel's* sister, Madame Moritz (a very talented actress and singer) is there: she saw Tannhäuser at Weimar. Things frequently happen like that." His guess was correct, and to Roeckel's sister is therefore due the honour of having set the ball rolling. She had not let the grass grow under her feet, for the performance of *Tannhäuser* which she attended must have been that on the 28th of June 51, as young Bülow writes on the 17th (to his father), "Herr Moritz is here with his wife, née Roeckel, who is singing as guest and will probably be engaged, since she pleases." The engagement was not to be; but that is neither here nor there: the Roeckel-Weimar parentage is established.*

The price for which Wagner sold his *Tannhäuser* to Schwerin was small enough, merely 20 louis d'or (£16) for good and all, though we shall find it by no means the lowest on the list. On the strength of it he took that water-cure at Albisbrunn; but these theatres were none too punctual in their settlements, and for at least the first month of his cure he was kept in suspense, at the very time his purse was at its emptiest. However, the Schwerin people made amends by promptitude and success of production. Their first performance took place on the 26th of January 1852; an historic date, for it was *Tannhäuser's* first step beyond the inner circle Liszt-cum-Wagner. "I have had glad tidings from Schwerin," writes the composer (to U.) in the midst of his orchestral practice at Zurich: "Tannhäuser has been given well there, and with great success. The accounts of those concerned overflow with joy." The opera must have been repeated thrice in less than four weeks, for Wagner writes again Feb. 26, "At Schwerin they have given Tannhäuser *four* times over, in rapid succession, with subscription suspended, and a great concourse of people (some even coming by rail): the success is so great, that they wish to have Lohengrin soon." Considering that even twenty years later the town (midway between Hamburg and Rostock) numbered only 25,000 inhabitants, it was a remarkable proof of the opera's power of attraction: "Moreover," as Wagner continues—evidently on the

* "Has Mme Moritz arrived? Has she appeared? Let me have full details of her capability"—writes Liszt from Eilsen to Raff, June 5; "Moritz wrote me from Wildbad the other day. Does his wife speak French? I should like to send her a letter of apology for my absence," a week or so later. "Frau Moritz is away for a couple of days, but will return," answers Raff on the 26th (see *Die Musik*, April 1902).

information of Frau Moritz, who presumably sang the part of Elisabeth—"they began well there. For instance, the singers were made to learn all their recitatives in strict tempo at first, to prove that they could not declaim more correctly than I had prescribed: only thereafter were they allowed greater freedom, and so on." So the result had justified the remark he made six months ago, upon the first intimation of Schwerin's desire: "On the whole I am losing somewhat of my repugnance to the performing of my operas. Where a theatre takes it into its head to want to give an opera of mine, at this time of day, I may at any rate assume that there's something special in the case, and as a rule some enthusiast behind it. Therefore if I can operate on the conductor and performers by letter, I see a possible guarantee" of competent treatment. That, we may presume, was the course he had adopted in the present instance.

The Schwerin production of *Tannhäuser* thus marks a distinct epoch in Wagner's outward career, the commencement of more general popularity. Yet he scarcely realised it at first, for he writes old Fischer, with the news still fresh, "The representation must really have been good; in no other way can I understand the success having been so great, and of that I have positive proof. Nevertheless, even this by no means lets me hope that my operas will take to spreading. I know these are merely isolated cases, instigated by a few individuals; our theatrical fair proper stays *intentionally* stuck in its beloved mud, and with it I therefore have nothing whatever to do." He was right, and he was wrong. The ball set rolling by Schwerin, when Weimar itself had slackened its spinning, was caught by clean and dirty hands; but nothing could arrest its course, and faster and faster it rolled before long.

Leipzig was the first to catch the ball from Schwerin; Leipzig that had dallied for years with one of Wagner's operas after the other, and as yet given none. In February 52 the people there began to think seriously of *Tannhäuser* at last, but the negotiations had so many awkward twists and turns, that the opera was not produced till January 53; a matter that will call for further comment.

After Leipzig, Frankfort; still following in the wake of Schwerin. In March 52 conductor Schmidt, his ears suddenly opening his mouth, opined that he "might venture Tannhäuser ere long." The "ere long" proved to be February next.

In contrast to the sluggishness of these two important centres, we have real ardour in the next two applicants. Needless to say, they hail from places with no pretence to musical standing. Wiesbaden makes its application in May: "Schindelmeisser has written me as to the score of Tannhäuser, which I have granted subject to conditions. . . . I am to have no honorarium, but tantième—which naturally will not bring me much." Louis Schindelmeisser, a companion of Wagner's boyhood and friend of his early manhood (see vol. i), had since "been egged against me by Reissiger," to quote Wagner's own words, probably during his ineffectual candidature for the post of Dresden Kapellmeister or Musikdirektor; so that we again may trace the beneficial influence of Schwerin and Roeckel's sister, especially as it is Frau Moritz who reports to the author from Wiesbaden the success of next November. The same lady is also responsible for the fifth application, that of Breslau in June, as may be seen in Wagner's letter to Uhlig of July 2. There we likewise hear of Berlin waking up at last, presumably amazed at the audacity of little Schwerin: "The other day, when I was out on a wet walk in the woods [above Fluntern], opera-regisseur Mantius of Berlin paid me a call; he assured my wife that the Berlin Intendance had long been thinking of Tannhäuser, and the only obstacle was a suitable tenor: they believed they had secured one now, in Formes, and accordingly a Berlin production was soon to be looked forward to." They had been "thinking of Tannhäuser" for more than six years, these quick-witted Berliners, but the thought was not to clothe itself in flesh for another three and a half, making *ten* in all! Berlin forms a ground-bass to the rest of this chapter, but we must keep it muted till the higher parts have been worked out.

At the beginning of July 1852 we may draw another, by no means an imaginary, line. The poem of *Die Walküre* was just completed: behind its author lay the recent successes of *Tannhäuser* at Schwerin and the *Holländer* at Zurich, about cancelling each other in the matter of pecuniary profit, but both contributing in no small measure to a celebrity which had begun with Weimar rather than with Dresden. Two hopeful applications for *Tannhäuser* had also been received, from Wiesbaden and Breslau; and three that still were destined to afford much

trouble before they yielded dubious fruit. Put another way, in seven years from its full-scoring, *Tannhäuser* had been mounted at three different places, Dresden, Weimar and Schwerin, at intervals of three years each; five others, Leipzig, Frankfort, Breslau, Wiesbaden and Berlin, were treating for it with more or less sincerity.

Such was the position when the composer set out on his four-weeks trip, as related at the end of last chapter: "As to the spread of Tannhäuser, I have everything to—expect; as yet I *know* only of Wiesbaden for certain," he had written Uhlig. Even during his holiday, however, things commence to look more hopeful; from Meiringen, Lugano and Geneva, his letters contain business answers to Uhlig's inquiries relative to Frankfort and Leipzig. On his return, the applications begin simply to pour in; so that the next six or seven weeks have to be devoted to almost nothing but correspondence with his Dresden friend and the various managers, conductors and so forth—a very serious interruption to creative work. For one thing, though it is not the point that worries him most, the theatres are very dilatory in paying their stipulated fee in advance: Aug. 30 he says, "I could not send my packet to you yesterday, since I had no money to frank it with. Thus do the shabby directors leave me in the lurch. Luckily I have just received the 50 thalers of the Wurzburg manager, and so am flush again for the moment"; and a week later, "*Money* from nowhere but Wurzburg as yet." It is odd that Wurzburg, where his first opera was written, should have been the first of the recent clamourers to pay him for *Tannhäuser*, particularly as the work does not seem to have been given there till February 1855; but what a fee for perpetual performing-rights—exactly £7 : 10s!

The Wurzburg payment had been obtained through an ingenious application of that "practical" talent on which Liszt compliments his comrade more than once. The letter of August 30 to Uhlig goes on to say: "You will already have noticed the dodge I have hit on to force directors to pay up; for you presumably have received for inspection two of the passes which I have imposed upon them, those for Wurzburg and Dusseldorf. I mean to keep to this plan for the future, and heartily regret that I did not invent it as soon as ever I commenced my dealings with the Leipzigers." From the context and from other refer-

ences, these "Zwangspässe" would appear to have consisted in some kind of authorisation signed by Wagner and countersigned by the respective directors, which the latter had to send to Uhlig accompanied by a *post-office voucher*, as evidence that the fee had been forwarded to the composer, whereupon Uhlig would send the applicant a copy of the full score.* There is a manifest spice of humour in their designation, for the dictionary defines *Zwangspass* as "a term in German law: compulsory passport, given by the police to persons who are obliged to leave a place"; —the Saxon police would have been glad to get the Swiss authorities to give the artist such a "pass."

All this pother to extract from German directors what amounted to little higher than an alms. For the score and right to present *Tannhäuser* in perpetuity they were asked scarcely more than should in justice have been the composer's recompense for one single night. With Breslau—which is the first theatre to come to definite terms with him after his return to Zurich—he settles for twenty Friedrichs d'or (£17), "to be paid to yourself [U.] or me immediately acceptance is declared." Then Dusseldorf applies (perhaps incited by Frau Wesendonck, a native thereof), and as "they appear to have a really good orchestra," Uhlig is to try to get 18 louis d'or from them; "if not, let them have the score for ten"; i.e., £8 for score and rights! "Possibly you may also receive an inquiry from Prague: in that case, make the same conditions as with Breslau, which I must maintain in general for theatres of second rank; I clearly see I can't go higher." If large cities like Breslau and Prague were to be classed as of "second rank," with an honorarium of some paltry sixteen pounds, there was not much hope of getting rich on the tribute from those of third rank. Among the latter stood Cologne, as to which Wagner dryly remarks in September that it "doesn't seem able to muster the 10 louis," though it does scrape them up a month later. There were still lower depths, though: "Do you think it cost me no self-control to refuse Tannhäuser the other day to a strolling manager at Rudolstadt?

* The above account of the transaction is purely inferential, as I have never heard of any of these "Zwangspässe" having been published. There should be a goodly store of them somewhere, probably among the personal effects of Uhlig, Fischer and Heine, and a specimen might well be unearthed and printed as a literary curiosity.—W. A. E.

I'm convinced the man would have paid me 4 louis for it." The sum ironically suggested would have established a record—by a bare three or four pounds.

We have taken Wurzburg and Cologne a week or two out of their order. The next to follow Breslau and Dusseldorf was Hanover, which "is in train to give Tannhäuser by special command of the King"; at least, so Wagner is informed. The royal command must have been a myth, for the work never appeared in that minor capital till January 55. It was another sign of spreading interest, however, and Uhlig, who has lately been developing into a volunteer agent, is accordingly begged to engage a second copyist if one should find the task of rectifying the lithographed scores (especially as regards the closing scene) too heavy. Three days later the necessity of professional assistance is manifest, for a whole avalanche of theatres descends: "A theatrical-bureau man, Michaelson of Berlin, acquaints me with the inquiry of no less than *five* theatres for *Tannhäuser* (among them, Dusseldorf: but besides it, Riga, Stettin, Dantzig, Königsberg). I don't think of entering into personal correspondence with people of that sort; so I shall accept the offer of a go-between, if only to save so much writing. But I make it a condition that the fee be sent me *first*, after deducting the commission. Prepare yourself then, you unfortunate, to have scores in readiness"; or, as he puts it August 23, "There will soon have to be a perfect *hail-storm of scores ! !*"*

Under the circumstances it was absolutely necessary to take some step to ensure the opera's being performed with at least an approach to its author's intentions. Towards quite minor theatres he might be more or less "indifferent," as he explains to F. Heine a year hence, but in the hands of the larger ones lay his artistic reputation unprotected for many a year to come: "Light

* Not to overload the text with a catalogue of minor German towns, in which the English reader may be supposed to take but little interest, the following may be accepted as a fairly complete chronological summary of the first two years of the actual spread of *Tannhäuser* :—**1852**, Schwerin (Jan.), Breslau (Oct.), Wiesbaden (Nov.).—**1853**, Riga and Leipzig (Jan.), Frankfort (Feb.), Dusseldorf, Cologne, Bromberg, Cassel (Spohr, May), Posen, Darmstadt, Freiburg i. Breisgau, Hamburg (Nov.), Königsberg, Dantzig, Bremen, Stralsund, Magdeburg. An approximately accurate list of first performances of *all* of Wagner's works, throughout the world, will be found in the *Bayreuther Blätter* 1896.

would first dawn on them if they saw my operas rendered by myself." For this reason, with the solitary exception of Weimar, he himself had not stirred a finger since his exile to get his works performed. The sudden demand was none of his seeking, but on financial grounds it would have been madness to turn a deaf ear to it: "If I bother about my former operas, it is purely through the force of circumstances, by no means from any inclination of my own"—thus he writes Liszt not a month after the "hailstorm." Farther on in the letter, a discussion of Berlioz' and Raff's remodelling of their operas leads him to an instructive review of his own artistic past: "Out of *what* can the artist create, if not *from life?* And is not this life of artistically productive value only when it drives a man onward to new creations answering to it? How stands it with the *fountain of all art*, if the new does not well forth from it quite irresistibly to *new* creations? . . . If Raff's [first] opera has pleased so much as you tell me, he ought to be content; and in any case he has been rewarded better than I for my 'Feen,' which never came to performance at all; or for my 'Liebesverbot,' which attained to one shocking performance; or for my 'Rienzi,' which I think so little of reviving, that I should not permit it even if it were mooted anywhere. As to the *Dutchman*, *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin*, I trouble only with reluctance, and simply because I know they have not been properly *understood* as yet—owing to imperfect representations: had they had their due already anywhere, the devil might take this outlived coil." It is the same as the edict of two years since, "Then burn the score" (227 *ant.*).

No momentary grumble, this complaint that none of his three "romantic operas" had been adequately rendered yet. The *Communication* has shewn us his opinion even of the Dresden performances of *Tannhäuser* in the forties: "The zeal and talent of the performers succeeded in gradually making my opera go down. But that success could not deceive me, now that I *knew* where I was with the public"; for "it was now that I first grew definitely conscious that the character habitual to our opera-performances was at total variance with what *I* demanded of a representation" (*P.* I. 338 and 337). During the present period of reviving interest he expresses himself more unreservedly, in private to Uhlig: "Tannhäuser secured a really full house in Dresden only when it had not been given for some time. This

proved to me that the public viewed it as a tantalising riddle, which curiosity attracted it to solve, but which scared it away again with the failure of each renewed attempt. The chief blame —and to this I adhere—lay in the defects of the portrayal: the *real Tannhäuser* never came to show there; for him there was not an ounce of sympathy."

Weimar, on the other hand, had presented a far more sympathetic hero, despite his much inferior voice; but the work itself had been terribly maimed there. To tell the truth, Liszt had missed the true dramatic bearings of a work which it was so easy to confound with lyric opera. In May last year he had written Wagner, "The direction of 'Tannhäuser' I fancy I now may leave to Götze"; and a month later, to Raff, "I'm not needed in the least at present. 'Tannhäuser' now stands perfectly firm, and I have already expressed to Herr v. Zigesar my wish that Götze should take it over once for all." But he was reckoning without—his guest. Young Bülow arrived in Liszt's absence, and *heard* it conducted by his deputy. Hans had previously heard it under Wagner (Dresden), and was shocked at the contrast, as the composer writes Uhlig Oct. 51: "Bülow is—justly—indignant at the mutilations of Tannhäuser at Weimar. It is to be restored. I therefore beg you send at once to Weimar one of the revised scores I asked you to keep in readiness."

Liszt, the long-suffering, submits with good grace to beginning his labours all over again, and Wagner diplomatically writes him: "Regarding Tannhäuser, I am very pleased to hear [through Bülow] that you propose to accede to my wish and bring it into what I consider its best form. Only on that condition can a continued success of this opera at Weimar have interest for me. I could not reproach you in the smallest for having deemed certain omissions needful in your first preparation; nor was it that you disapproved of the parts omitted; but you *then* had reason to mistrust the artistic resources at your disposal. Thus —I feel sure—arose in particular that long cut in the finale of the second act which disturbed me so much when I attended a rehearsal at Weimar [May 1849.—Here follows an analysis of the scene where Elisabeth protects the hero]. . . . But now that in *Lohengrin* you have solved far more difficult problems, it positively becomes your *duty*—frankly I say so, dear friend—to

restore this scene to its integrity; and I know that success will reward you. It is the same with the rest of the work. . . . As regards the new close of the last act, I really was much annoyed that it was not given at Weimar from the first, as I took for granted at the time. I did not want another audience to know the first version at all. . . . As said, if the representation of Tannhäuser at Weimar is not henceforth *entire*, it loses all value for me, and I have not drawn the public *to me*, but accommodated *myself to it*" (Jan. 30, '52). After an interval of puzzling silence, Liszt is docility itself, and declares it Weimar's foremost duty to give Wagner's operas entirely "*selon le bon plaisir de l'auteur*," but does not altogether understand as yet; "We must re-study the whole second finale (with the exception of the little Dresden cut in the Adagio), which will be done by next performance. The new ending, unfortunately, must wait till next season, for it will need fresh scenery, which cannot be painted in time; everything else is in readiness, and the parts are copied out" (May 52). That does not content his friend, however: the "little Dresden cut" had caused the deepest grief to him, since it "cut away all hope of Tannhäuser," and had simply been wrung from him by the impossibility of getting Tichatschek to grasp the character. So Liszt receives a long and pathetic defence of the scene, ending with the additional exhortation: "If a representation of Tannhäuser is to be *quite* perfect, the last ending of the opera must also be given complete, as in the new edition of the pianoforte-score, *with* the chorus of Younger Pilgrims" (May 29, '52).

All this was before the Hail of Scores. Now, with so many theatres applying for the opera, it was absolutely imperative to prevent the earlier example of Dresden, still more the recent practice of Weimar, from being taken as an archetype. If the author himself could have visited Germany at this critical epoch, he might have breathed into his exponents the true spirit of his work. That was impossible: "Am I to beg the King of Saxony —or rather, his ministers—for grace? to humble myself and play the penitent? Who would ask *that* of me?" (to L., Nov. 9). Some other means must be devised: "As it is out of the question for me to write to every conductor and performer of Tannhäuser *in spe*, I'm drawing up a summary of the mode in which I want the production carried out. . . . Unfortunately I

can work but slowly, as everything is an uncommon tax on my brain just now" (to U., Aug. 14). "Only to-day have I finished the manuscript of my 'Address on the performing of Tannhäuser': it had to be more explicit than I thought at first, but I'm glad I hit on this expedient for removing a great load from my heart. It has taken much out of me, however, and I shall have to try to rest it off" (*ibid.* Aug. 23).

Wagner's original idea with this Promemoria (as he calls it elsewhere) was to have it published as an article in, or a supplement to, the *Neue Zeitschrift*, and thus kill two birds with one stone; since Brendel, not seeing the point of "letters on the formation of alps," was always worrying him for an æsthetic contribution. "On mature reflection I found it best to give the manuscript to be printed at once as a brochure here (privatim and gratis) as soon as possible. I've ordered 200 copies, and will send you a good share of them immediately, so that you may despatch them to the theatres together with the scores. I mean to appeal to the public as well, though, and shall let Brendel have a copy for reprinting in the Zeitschrift." Within a week the Promemoria, or Guide, was printed, and half of the (private) edition despatched to Uhlig; but there were delicate grounds for not having it reprinted in the *Neue Zeitschrift* exactly as it stood: "I should regret it for the sake of certain people whom I have been obliged to mention with blame"; so Uhlig is to make copious extracts from it, but omit a few parts.*

The people likely to be offended were two: Schröder-Devrient (now Baroness v. Bock) and Tichatschek. As to the lady, her mind had already been exercised by a reference in the *Communication*: "A couple of days ago," wrote Liszt last April, "I saw Madame B.-D. here. She is looking remarkably well, and her husband is quite a handsome, well-bred *gentleman*. Among other things, she told me she could not understand the allusion to herself in your Preface, and her husband had remained in the same ignorance of its meaning after reading this passage several times through.—For the rest, she speaks quite well of you, and very much wishes to see Lohengrin here." The passage in question

* Thus it appeared in the *N. Z.* for Dec. 3 and 24, 1852, and Jan. 1, 7 and 14, 1853. The pamphlet seems to have been reprinted entire, however, in the author's *Ges. Schr.* vol. v (1872), from which it is translated in *Prose Works* III.

will be found in *Prose Works* I. 320-1; perhaps it was a mistake to print it, though it handles most gently and sympathetically a situation quite notorious at the time. There is point accordingly in Wagner's answer: "That the Devrient and her husband fail to understand the passage in my Preface, shews exceptionally fine tact. It certainly was the best way of sparing themselves an unpleasant impression, and I am delighted that they have been able to adopt it; for, positively and truthfully, I had no intent to wound her."

With the author's criticisms of the Dresden Venus and Tannhäuser in this Guide it was another matter. The Devrient and Tichatschek had 'created' those rôles, as the phrase goes; their artistic position in Germany being unrivalled, their lead was only too sure to be followed; yet their 'creations' had in this case done imperfect justice to the author's aim. Considerations of personal esteem and private friendship must go by the board, in a memorandum addressed to their successors "in spe." Taught by his recent experience, Wagner very wisely withheld his individual strictures from the public; yet friend Tichatschek had much to suffer when the pamphlet reached the Dresden theatre, where the opera's revival then was looming. "I'm sorry for X," writes Wagner to Uhlig, Sept. 27; "if I could suppose that my brochure had also proved a lesson to him, the shock would have done him good. But as there probably is not the smallest hope of that, it can have been nothing but a humiliation to him; a humiliation I was forced to put upon him with a certain—to him a useless—cruelty; and I really can't imagine how he is going to forgive me." How the unequalled "Rienzi" took it at the moment, is touchingly related by Alexander Ritter, who in his youth had witnessed all the nineteen performances of *Tannhäuser* under Wagner at Dresden, and considers his verdict a just one: "Tichatschek was besieged with letters, anonymous and signed. His room was never free of callers, who came to offer their 'condolences' on the 'ingratitude' of the composer. To no effect!—One morning I found him alone in his room—in tears. When I began to comfort him, he cut me short, 'Hurt? I'm thinking of no hurt, and feel none here. What I feel, is deep sorrow at learning that my service really gave my friend so much less ground for thanks than I had believed.' And so, despite the positive genius for mischief-making of those who

persisted in trying to stir bad blood, he remained the master's same, entirely unchanged, devoted friend. Not the smallest trace of rancour could find an entry into this great heart" (*Bayr. Bl.* 1892). Tichatschek would have been more than human, notwithstanding, had he not felt *a little* estrangement after the first self-reproaches had lost their sting. At the end of 1852 Liszt wishes Wagner to write and beg the celebrated tenor to undertake the part of Lohengrin at a special Weimar performance next February; Wagner replies (Jan. 13, '53), "Unfortunately I cannot write to T.: he is furious with me on account of my Guide to the performing of Tannhäuser. Naturally, he cannot understand me." He accepted the Weimar offer, and was only prevented by Lüttichau from fulfilling it—according to Liszt's next letter (Jan. 23); nevertheless we find Wagner writing to F. Heine next June ('53), "If you could but succeed in bringing Tichatschek to reason! Honestly, I never meant a slight on him. When he begins to grow reasonable, he shall have a letter too." But in any case the tenor's resentment can have been no more than skin-deep, for Liszt tells Wagner in January 54: "Tichatschek is to sing Lohengrin twice for us in the middle of May. . . . He is behaving quite admirably again, and I thank you for having written him a couple of friendly lines, for he really deserves it by the warmth of his attachment to yourself and works. He had come to the Lohengrin performance at Leipzig, and during an entr'acte we met in the buffet, where he told me you had written him, which much delighted me." A month later we have independent evidence of the singer's devotion; Feb. 15, '54, brings a letter to Fischer: "I read in all the papers that the Pesth people want to give Tannhäuser in the Spring, with Tichatschek. That's very fine, and rejoices me heartily, on Tichatschek's part; though I should like to know *how* the Pesth people are going to get hold of the score. Please ask Tichatschek, who, I trust, no longer is cross with me: give him my best greetings." Two years after that, again, we have Tichatschek paying Wagner a visit at Zurich, completing the reconciliation for good.

Now, what was the direful passage in this Guide that Wagner's Dresden enemies so rubbed into his almost childlike friend in hope to cause a rodent sore? We have quoted it in vol. ii, but must repeat it here a shade more literally. It is simply this:

"The first representative of Tannhäuser—unable as yet, in his capacity of eminently-gifted singer, to comprehend aught save regular 'Opera'—could not succeed in grasping the characteristic of a claim addressed far more to his acting powers than to his vocal talent." There lay the whole gist of *Tannhäuser*, and it would have been suicidal to pass in silence the only reason for a cut (act ii) which had sapped the very vitals of the drama. Weimar already had adopted that cut—and enlarged it: was the work thus to be whittled away ad infinitum? On the other hand, without acquaintance with the reason, how could managers be expected to ask their inferior tenors to fulfil a task the greatest male singer in Germany had fallen short of?

In truth the character of Tannhäuser is an impossible one for any mere singer, however eminent; from the dramatic standpoint it is far more difficult than Lohengrin, and only exceeded in Wagnerian Drama by Wotan and Parsifal. In this Guide, which he now is issuing to the theatres, the dramatist "admits that it may be one of the hardest problems ever set before an actor." But it is purely a question of *understanding;* and whoever will take the trouble to study the vivid sketch that covers three pages of this brochure, must be very poorly equipped for the stage if he cannot thereafter present us with at least a colourable likeness. To be thoroughly successful, however, the tenor has "to become the diametric opposite of his former self," as Wagner demonstrates in another two pages devoted to the natural history of this peculiar breed of mortals. "Let him not reply, that he has already been faced with tasks which made unusual demands on his acting powers. I can prove to him that what he has haply mastered in the so-called dramatic-tenor rôles of latter days will never help him out with Tannhäuser; for I could shew him that the character I have denounced in our modern tenors has been taken as an invariable quantity in the operas of Meyerbeer, for instance, and allowed-for with the utmost shrewdness" (*P.* III. 203).

The general effect of this homily, on the theatres that *read* it, will be noticed presently: to have delivered it on the threshold of a long-deferred success, is characteristic of Richard Wagner. Here he stands with no cap in hand; instead of begging the favour of directors and singers, he lays down the law for them, let them take it in good part as they please. For instance, "I hold so firmly

to the fulfilment of my stipulation for sufficient reading-rehearsals, that once for all I express the wish—nay, the will—that, should these reading-rehearsals fail to rouse in those concerned a lively interest in the subject, my work be laid entirely aside and its production given up" (*ibid.* 173). "Upon observance of the altered ending I rigidly insist," he says in another paragraph (*ibid.* 185); but perhaps his masterfulness comes out most forcibly in the following: "I must tell Directors that they can expect no manner of success from the production of my *Tannhäuser*, saving when the representation is prepared with the choicest care in every respect; with a care such as shall give to this representation, compared with the usual run of opera-performances, the character of something quite Exceptional" (*ibid.* 191).

That the condescension was not on their side, directors had been fairly warned at the very commencement of the Guide: "Not a few theatres are entertaining the idea of producing my *Tannhäuser* ere long. This unexpected situation, by no means due to my initiative, has made me feel the hindrance of my inability to attend their preparations so keenly, that I was in actual doubt for long whether I ought not to refuse my sanction to all such undertakings for the present. . . . It is among the greatest torments I have had to endure in recent times, that I have not been able to be present at the single attempts already made to perform my dramatic works, in order to arrange an infinitude of details through whose exact observance alone can a thoroughly correct conception of the whole be gained by the exponent artists. Wherefore, if paramount reasons have induced me to place no unconditional obstacle in the way of further productions of my earlier works, it has been in the trust that I might succeed in making up for the impossibility of oral and personal intervention by written communications to the respective managers and performers. However, the number of the theatres which have applied to me for *Tannhäuser* has so considerably increased of late, that private correspondence with each several conductor and performer would prove a burden past my strength; so I seize on the expedient of the present summary, which I address in the first place to all to whose goodwill and understanding I have to entrust my work" (*ibid.* 169-70).

Not at every point is the author inflexible. There are one

or two of the "Dresden cuts" which he even legitimises "at a pinch" for weaker vessels, such as struggling theatres in the minor towns—but only for those. One verse of Tannhäuser's song to Venus in the first scene appears to hover on the margin of this category (*ibid.* 177); the return of the 'hunt' at the close of act i falls within it; though the famous "Zum Heil den Sündigen zu führen" is rigidly insisted on, a subsequent passage in the Allegro of the same finale is directed to be sacrificed "if the singer of Tannhäuser should feel too much exhausted by that adagio passage to sing this also with the fullest energy" (*ibid.* 182);* moreover a portion of Elisabeth's prayer and its ensuing dumb-show are made contingent on the actress's ability (*ibid.* 185). One further cut comes up for judgment of a different nature; the abridgment of the original prelude to act iii, having been dictated by artistic experience, is not permissive, but obligatory. On the contrary, the composer wishes theatres of first rank to restore that angelic chorus of Younger Pilgrims which he himself had omitted from the second version of the opera's close owing to defectiveness of the Dresden choir—a chorus that alone can bring the drama to a fitting end.

To the prospective singers he by no means plays the martinet who castigates all individuality. Certainly he tells them, "I have never made away my right to prescribe the phrasing of declamatory passages just as strictly as of purely lyric measures. Whoever, therefore, confounds these passages with customary Recitative, and consequently transforms their rhythm out of sheer caprice, deforms my music to the full as much as if he fathered other notes and harmonies upon my lyric Melody." There we catch an echo of what had obviously been dinned into the ears of the Schwerin people by letter; but the remainder of the Schwerin reference (p. 355 *ant.*) also finds its counterpart:—"If I have been so fortunate, however, as to find my indications for delivery felt to be correct, and therefore consciously adopted by

* See also the letter to Liszt of May 29: "No representation of Tannhäuser can answer my purpose if this adagio passage has to be left out! For its sake I agree, at a pinch, to the cut in the Allegro of the finale, which is really a continuation of this passage: I mean where Elisabeth takes up the B-major theme as *canto fermo* while Tannhäuser gives passionate vent to his despair. For a performance of this opera to satisfy me wholly, however, Tannhäuser would have to render this passage also—and so that it did not seem too long."

the singers, then at last I urge an almost complete abandonment of the rigour of the musical beat.*. . . From the moment the singer has come to complete accord with my intentions for the rendering, let him give free rein to his natural sensibility: and the more creative he can become through fullest liberty of feeling, the more will he pledge me to delighted thanks" (*P.* III. 174-5).

The conductor and band come in, of course, for instructions both general and particular, more than two whole pages being devoted to the various 'modifications' requisite for shading the tempi of the overture.† Even the numerical strength of the orchestra is prescribed: "With the instrumentation of 'Tannhäuser' I so deliberately kept a particularly strong muster of strings in view, that I must positively insist on all theatres increasing their stringed instruments beyond the usual quota; and my requirements may be measured by this simple gauge—I declare that an orchestra which cannot assemble at least four good viola-players, can bring nothing but a mutilation of my music to hearing." For German orchestras in his days were "invariably under-manned with 'strings.' Much might be said about the grounds of this lack of fine feeling for the truest needs of a good orchestral rendering, and that pretty conclusive as to the condition of music in Germany. Thus much is certain: the French—however we decry their levity—keep their smallest orchestras better manned with 'strings' than many of

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* A refined *tempo rubato*, so to speak.—In the *Lohengrin* full score there is an eloquent hint as to how the composer meant *life* to be breathed into his musical signs: to the Royal fanfare a footnote is appended, directing the triplet to be taken a shade faster than its strict value, the difference being made up in the following minim.

† Letter 89 to Uhlig (mid-November 52) says, "The Musikgesellschaft of Utrecht (Holland) has been the first to reply to my recent notice in the Neue Zeitschrift." An advertisement had appeared in the issue for Nov. 5: "I beg conductors, who propose to perform my *overture to Tannhäuser* in the concert-room, to address themselves to me for a few remarks I have to make to them respecting such a performance.—Zurich, October 30, 1852. Richard Wagner." The "remarks" would presumably consist in a despatch of the Programme and a cutting from the Guide. Apropos of Utrecht, a letter to Wesendonck of October 54 contains the following quip: "We have been made an Honorary Member of the Netherlands Music-Society. Our first joint laurel-wreath I beg you hang up in your counting-house."

our quite famous bands in Germany." Apart from the rebuke to his countrymen, we have a suggestion of personal history here. *Rienzi*, the *Dutchman* and the *Faust* overture, in all of which the master has lately been deploring an excess of brass, were scored in Paris: may not that excess be in part attributed to his counting on a larger complement of strings to cloak it? The point is worth consideration by musical experts, but must not detain ourselves.

Very ample directions are supplied to the stage-manager, and among them we have one of those streaks of sarcasm without which no Wagnerian article would be complete: "Marches, in the ordinary acceptation, are not to be found in my latest operas; therefore, if the Entry of Guests (act ii, scene 4) be executed so that the choir and supers march upon the stage in double file, describe the favourite serpentine curve, and range themselves along the wings in two regimental lines, awaiting further operatic business,—I merely beg the band to play any march it likes from 'Norma' or 'Belisario,' but not my music" (*ibid.* 193).

A schedule of instructions to total strangers is scarcely the place to look for pathos, but by the time Wagner has been discoursing at length to any group of persons he generally has worked himself up to the fancy that they are actual "friends," and the close of this address is quite as affecting as the Dedication of *Lohengrin* to Liszt some three months back. "I have a mournful feeling that I have most imperfectly fulfilled my aim: namely, to make good a thing denied to me, yet needful to me more than anyone—a personal and word-of-mouth communication to all concerned. My only solace is reliance on the goodwill of my artistic comrades; a goodwill such as never artist needed more for the effectuation of his artwork, than I need in my present plight. May all whom I have addressed reflect on my peculiar lot, and ascribe to the mood it has necessarily engendered in me any stray sentence wherein I may have shewn myself too anxious, too apprehensive, or even too mistrustful, rigorous and harsh.—In view of the unwontedness of such an Address as the preceding, I must prepare myself for its being wholly or for the most part disregarded—perhaps not even understood—by many to whom it is directed. Yet if merely among a handful of individuals I thoroughly attain my aim, that attainment will richly compensate

me for all mischanced besides; and cordially do I grasp in advance the hand of those valorous artists who shall not have been ashamed to concern themselves more closely with me, and more familiarly to befriend me, than is the habit of our modern art-world's intercourse."

So we bid farewell to one of the most lucid and informing of its author's minor works. When sent to Liszt, he is told that he will not find much new matter in it, as the greater part has already formed the subject of previous letters; "yet, as you propose to get up Tannhäuser afresh, you might find it a useful support if you communicated it to the stage-manager and singers." But, little as one might have inferred it from the clearness of the pamphlet's style, "This work has been another torture to me. This eternal traffic with pen and book-type is terrible, especially when it is ever about subjects whose importance so long has lain entirely behind me!" We shall see how Liszt laid his friend's counsel to heart. But the others? It is well that Wagner had prepared himself for its being "wholly or for the most part disregarded." Years afterwards he had run out of his last copy of the pamphlet, and made inquiry of the management of the Munich Court-theatre for one of the copies presented to it so long ago: "All six copies were happily discovered in the archives, locked up safe; not one had been so much as cut" (*P.* III. 3).

It was cut in some places, though; with opposite effects. Two typical cases are instanced by its author at the time: "Schindelmeisser has delighted me; now that he has read my memorandum, he is going to begin the rehearsing of Tannhäuser all *afresh;* a different story to the Leipzigers'" (to U., Oct. 5). "My Guide to the performing of Tannhäuser has already made the *Leipzigers* throw up the opera: a very discreet confession of bad will. On the other hand, I am rejoiced that Schindelmeisser at Wiesbaden, after reading my brochure, has begun his rehearsals de novo" (to L., Oct. 3). And here is the result of Schindelmeisser's study: "My Guide has had a splendid effect on him," so Wagner tells Uhlig (Nov. 10): "He writes me that he is 'appalled' (*entsetzt*) with this music, for 'entranced' (*entzückt*) is inadequate to describe the revolution it has wrought in him." "At Wiesbaden things went famously on the 13th [Nov.]. Schindelmeisser had previously written that the enthusiasm of the singers and orchestra at rehearsals already knew no bounds; from which I argue that

his study was admirable. After the performance, both he and Frau Moritz tell me of an unexampled furore. (Perhaps you've read about it in the Frankfort papers?) I pass over the details, which convince me of the truth of this furore: above all I am rejoiced at S. himself (once set against me by R.). Even on the strength of the rehearsals he had resolved upon Lohengrin. The Moritz assures me the precision was unsurpassable. — The railway had brought numerous friends from Cologne (Bischoff!!), Mayence, Frankfort, Darmstadt etc. From Munich came the factotum of the Intendant there, with orders to report home at once. Anyhow Munich will give Tannhäuser soon." Munich did not, till August 1855; and then—it never cut its copies of the Guide; it had clean forgotten their existence!

Wiesbaden thus became a third focus of Wagner's fame: Weimar, Schwerin, Wiesbaden — all small towns, but able to attract their visitors from larger cities.* In crying contrast stood Leipzig, for another generation. The effect of the Guide on its author's birthplace was disastrous; yet it was merely the last straw on a stubborn camel's back. We must therefore go into a little previous history.

Even before the Weimar production of *Lohengrin* Liszt had suggested that, should it prove an enduring success, Wagner might influence his own connections, the Brockhaus family, to get it mounted in Leipzig; though he feared that, "if left to its natural fate there," it might incur "partly the malice attaching to your personality, partly the envy and ignorance that will oppugn your genius" (July 1850)—so Wagner's Leipzig enemies were not the fictive bugbears our modern reviewers elect to believe. To Liszt's suggestion Wagner then replied: "With your amiable anxiety for the further spread of my Lohengrin I can sympathise almost solely in view of its material advantages—since live I must—but not as regards my renown. Of course I should like

* To be exact, the Breslau production came a month before that at Wiesbaden; but Wiesbaden really takes third place for fruitful initiative. As for the second minor town, in Herr Glasenapp's list of "Tannhäuser-dates," covering nearly thirty pages of the *Bayreuther Taschen-Kalender* 1891, we read under 1852: "February 14 a special train brings 250 persons to Schwerin to hear a performance of *Tannhäuser*. . . . Fourteen repetitions of the opera by end of the year."

to convey my thoughts to a still wider circle: but do people really listen to an importuner? I neither can, nor will, thrust myself forward. Surely you are doing enough to draw the attention of people to me: would you have me also pluck their sleeve and beg them for a hearing? Dearest—these people are lax and cowardly; they have no heart. Leave them out! If ever I'm to come to anything, let it be through those whose heart is in the cause. Where I have to offer myself, I already have lost all power: and what store can I set on a 'Leipzig production'? At the best, it could be no more than a *good* performance; and how is that to come about, unless somebody like yourself were to undertake it? . . . Even the thought of money could not move me to provoke performances that could only—fall out ill." To Uhlig also, at the selfsame time, "Liszt wants me to back him up in getting Lohengrin produced in Leipzig and Hamburg too. I've had to reply that I cannot desire those productions, as they would be certain to turn out badly." With regard to *Lohengrin*, Wagner's fears were only too well-founded; in January 54 he will have to shudder at its recent "Leipzig murder."

A year after the Weimar production Leipzig had itself begun to manifest some interest in the opera, evidently due to that composite article in the *Illustrirte* and to Dr Härtel's personal reports. Concurrently with the news of Schwerin's application for *Tannhäuser*, Wagner tells Uhlig (Aug. 51): "I have nothing against a performance of Lohengrin at Leipzig; only, I should like them to proceed a little more systematically there: namely, first give the Dutchman, then Tannhäuser—and only then Lohengrin. I shall write to Härtels in this sense. Wherever I can exert any influence, I would propose this course: at the least, they ought to give Tannhäuser first." That was the time when he was commencing to overcome his fatherly reluctance to let his operas go the round. But the idea of a Leipzig production had apparently been no more than a pious wish of *Lohengrin's* publishers; not another move is made by this stepmotherly birthplace until after the Schwerin success, when she pricks up her ears to a possible sound investment. "The Leipzigers have inquired about the fee for Tannhäuser (ridiculously enough, through Sturm und Koppe)"—writes Wagner to Uhlig, Feb. 26, '52—"I have answered to Rietz, and promised the score, but solely on condition that *he* will go bail for the spirit

of production." As they had been too superior to approach him directly, we need not be surprised at hearing on the 11th of March, "Down to to-day I have had no answer from the Leipzig theatre"; and again on the 25th, "Still no answer from Leipzig: Rietz must be aghast at me. Merely Sturm und Koppe have inquired of the theatre-director here whether he knew why I had not answered them!" Mendelssohn's successor at the Gewandhaus, Julius Rietz, now opera-conductor at the Leipzig theatre, and hereafter at that of Dresden (1860), must have been a pleasant sort of "colleague" if he could not even inform the agents that Wagner had answered direct to *him*. To Wagner himself he deigned no reply, for this is the résumé of the whole transaction to date as rendered by the composer to Uhlig on April 4: "So I made too extravagant demands for the production of Tannhäuser? That is too heavenly not to have amused me! Listen.—I'm asked through Sturm und Koppe what my fee may be. Thereupon I write to *Rietz* as follows: In such a matter I cannot deal through a business-agent, since my main conditions are *artistic* of nature; I conclude from the inquiry, however, that there exists a desire to perform Tannhäuser, and—as I may assume that it emanated from Rietz—I also behold in it the best guarantee of a good artistic spirit in the intended production. On *this assumption* I therefore willingly consented to the production, and asked 28 louis d'or as honorarium, to be paid (out of town-funds) immediately on receipt of the score; but signified that the fee was not the most important point in my eyes.—To that I receive *no* answer, and hear at last through you that my conditions (presumably the artistic ones) are too exorbitant!—What is one to say about a man like Rietz, who considers it exacting of me to presuppose that he will interest himself in the production's being a good one?—You really must tell Brendel!—Henceforth the Leipzigers may go hang for me!" The only advantage of the affair is that it reminds him of the existence of a *Dutchman* score at Leipzig, as we have seen, which he now proceeds successfully to reclaim from that theatre, after a few formalities. So ends chapter one of the Leipzig shilly-shally.

Chapter two is one of the most disgraceful in the annals of the German stage; week after week it drags on, this double-dealing in the emporium of the Fatherland's belles lettres. How negotiations were reopened, does not appear; but Liszt

is informed June 16 ('52), "I'm expecting a little extra revenue next winter: Tannhäuser at Leipzig, and probably also at Breslau"; and Uhlig, July 2, "From Breslau I have had an inquiry through Frau Moritz, from Leipzig the *assurance of the intention* of the director to give Tannhäuser shortly 'with every requisite.'" Then Wirsing comes himself to Zurich, to make things smooth: "The director of the Leipzig theatre has just been to see me. The matter is arranged"—writes Wagner to Uhlig July 9, the day before starting on his trip, at the same time asking him to get the Dresden sketches for scenery and costumes lent to Wirsing, "who wants to follow them exactly at his theatre." But the original designs for the scenery cannot be lent by the draughtsman, Hähnel, as other theatres are also wanting sketches; so Wagner arranges that each theatre shall pay Hähnel 9 thalers for the set of copies, i.e. the trifling sum of 9s. apiece for the three chief scenes. From Lugano he bids Uhlig send a set to Leipzig, "to be paid for by the director" (July 22). One would scarcely believe it, but Wirsing declines to pay the beggarly amount, because it had not been stipulated in advance. "After receiving your news I wrote at once to W. to-day. I've tried to make him ashamed of himself, and told him roundly that, if he's going to act so shabbily, he had better abandon the production of Tannhäuser at once. In that case, as he hasn't sent my honorarium yet, all he need do would be to return you the score. You can get the ordered copies finished all the same: if not for Leipzig, they'll come in for somewhere else. In future—now I know the price of copies—I shall make a point of quoting for them in plain figures from the first." That was the agreeable news awaiting him at Geneva, when nearing home Aug. 3: no wonder the pleasure-trip did him so little good! "I had reckoned on the Leipzig honorarium to cover the rebate you know of in the Ritters' subsidy; and yet I can be so hardy in my attitude toward W.!" Then, on his return to Zurich, "You will probably hear something from Wirsing soon: don't let him have the drawings without the money" (Aug. 9).

Wirsing climbs down for the second time, a few days later: "*Leipzig* has humbly apologised to me, and begged forgiveness. Once more have I made it an obligation that it shall procure the

sketches for the scenery." So the designs presumably are paid for; yet the composer himself is still left without his fee, though the score had long been delivered: "No fee from anywhere as yet, and I'm thinking of having the Leipzig director somewhat roughly reminded ere long" (Aug. 23). "What *am* I to do with that Leipzig man, who takes no notice of my threats?" (Sept. 5). "I'm losing all patience with Leipzig. A few days since I wrote to Rietz, to lecture W.; but I suppose that also will be of no avail, and therefore beg you to get the enclosed 'injunction' served by one of your acquaintances, perhaps the first musician that occurs to you. I shall lose my temper furiously with this director: he doesn't answer at all" (Sept. 8). A pretty specimen of theatrical good-faith, when it becomes necessary to take legal steps to recover one's bare due! "Why is my mind so set on the 'wretched' Leipzig fee?"—repeating a question of Uhlig's—"I. Because that Wirsing grossly angers me. II. Because I need the money *very* much" (Sept. 19). So far as Leipzig is concerned, he will have to go on needing it for some time yet. "After waiting a whole week for the Leipzig money, amid crescendo lamentations from my wife on her vanishing housekeeping-budget, yesterday your letter arrives at last, and calmly opens up a prospect of the question's being settled in another week!" (to U., Sept. 27). It was settled in less time than that, but settled the wrong way: "To-day I receive W.'s letter, informing me that, after perusal of my Guide to the performing of Tannhäuser, the Leipzig theatre must give that opera up, and that the score had been returned to you. Good! Then my wife suddenly springs her lament on me that to-day is the 1st of October, and she's inconsolable at not being able to let her parents have their rent. That is the hardest cut of all."

This Leipzig business has consequently been tripping him up in every direction; nor is it by any means done with yet. The dear art-colleagues have such an exalted standard of professional sympathy. "The Leipzigers are a nice crew! Master Rietz"—the same who spread such charitable gossip in the Conservatoire during the Dresden revolt—"Master Rietz could not prevail upon himself to answer me even a line. I'd make anybody a present of the lot of them there! But never mind." Not even his score can he get back without a fight for it. Oct. 5 to Uhlig: "To-day I receive a letter from lawyer Steche of Leipzig, who

tells me Wirsing had replied to him also that the score was already returned. Steche still has his doubts, as W. is known to be a liar. And you write me nothing about it? If you've received the score, well and good; if *not*, let Steche (or Brendel) know at once, so that it may be raked in. Sulzer rather thinks W. is flattering himself I will write him again and lower my key; it would be droll, if he really were waiting for any such thing!" This Wirsing must indeed have been a slippery customer, for on the 11th Wagner inquires again of Uhlig whether the score has been returned, and on the 14th: "I'm glad you wrote to S. [lawyer Steche?]: the score must be torn from the teeth of the rogues. I have declared to S. that on no conditions will I now consent to Tannhäuser at Leipzig, at least so long as that theatre remains in its present state."

As we hear no more about the score, it is to be presumed that the lawyer at last succeeded in extracting it from Leipzig teeth, thus leading to some rabid gnashing thereof. "Strange! what silence Brendel preserves on the Tannhäuser affair: I should have thought it the very opportunity to expose the whole squalor of the Leipzig guild of music-makers! Härtels have written me quite alarmed: the director etc. had declared that my operas contained insuperable difficulties, and 'most of the theatres (so said W.) were making the same complaints.'—Nice fellows, those!" (to U., Nov. 10).

So, that was the underhand revenge Messrs Wirsing and Rietz were taking for Wagner's refusal to be rough-ridden: the publishers of *Lohengrin* were to be scared out of having any more to do with him. In Wagner's next to Uhlig (undated, but of the latter half of November) we have minuter particulars of the Härtels' alarm: "In answer to my offer of the Iphigenia and the Faust-overture for publication, Härtels lately wrote me very much in the dumps, quite put out by my making it so hard, almost impossible in fact, for any theatre to give my operas: my conduct toward Leipzig had been really too depressing, so they said, my demands for mounting too regardless, and so on.—In reply I spared myself no trouble to give them a microscopic record of all my dealings with Wirsing, Rietz etc., shewing them that on the one side W.'s villainy in the matter of payment, on the other, Rietz's manifest indisposition to submit to my *purely artistic* demands, were alone to blame for the

rupture; which, moreover, was *unique* of its kind, seeing that even the smallest theatres continued on the best of terms with me, etc., etc. Finally I told them they appeared to have fallen into a frame of mind so fatal to my works, through their ready credence of a notorious liar, that I would rather not disturb them further, and therefore withdrew my offers.—With these philistines, in general, I probably shan't travel far: they haven't the remotest idea of the nature and future of my works. Moreover I have so spoilt them by asking almost nothing for fee, that they now are naïve enough, apparently, to imagine they would never have to pay me anything but another such charity-dole."

That was the last poor Uhlig heard of the affair. Just after his death, however, Liszt is informed: "The *Leipzigers* also have crawled to the cross; they've capitulated to me through Härtels. The production there will probably take place soon. Could you possibly watch over it a little from time to time?" (Jan. 13, '53). Liszt was unable, and presumably would have been unwelcome; but *Tannhäuser* was produced at Leipzig on the 31st of January 1853. With what result? The *Neue Zeitschrift* reporter (probably Brendel himself) says that "The performers were called after every act; at the close the audience demanded Messrs Rietz and Wirsing also. In the same way the overture found tumultuous approval, and wherever an opportunity presented, as at a change of scene, enthusiasm broke itself a vent. . . . Thus Leipzig too, so long rebellious, has been won at last for the new art-tendency." Wagner, on the other hand, evidently alluding to this report, tells Liszt on the 11th of February: "A dirty piece of work at Leipzig once again! The director makes sacrifices, reinforces the orchestra, rebuilds this and that, and so on; in the hope of finding his outlay soon recouped him, he raises prices—as for something out of the common: the enthusiastic public—stops away, and leaves the second performance empty!—What a disgusting scandal it is!—I am never to have any joy in my life." Nevertheless, the work must have established itself in popular favour soon after, for it was repeated twenty times in course of the year, and one can only ask, Why was it not ventured seven years earlier?

Such were the fortunes of *Tannhäuser* at a leading Municipal theatre; let us see how it fares at a Court.

Not to be outdone by little Schwerin and the other towns that were awaking, Berlin had sent its operatic stage-manager to Zurich in June 52 to inquire about *Tannhäuser* (356 *ant.*), but the man was in too much of a hurry to wait for his host to return from a long walk in the rain; so Wagner had virtually to open negotiations himself, with regard to a score which he had submitted to Berlin so long ago as 1845. "The first tidings simply frightened me; I had confidence in nothing there, and my instinct counselled me to ward the whole thing off. Certainly, you occurred to me at once, as my only guarantee; but I had first to make sure of your consent to undertake Tannhäuser in Berlin. Almost solely to gain time, I sent to Berlin my demand for a thousand thalers, and at the same time wrote you, urgently asking if you would take this matter up"—so Wagner recapitulates to Liszt next November, at a crisis in the proceedings. Unfortunately, the letter to which he refers is not included in the *Correspondence;** a letter to Uhlig of August 9, however, contains the following: "I have no idea at all, as yet, how things are going in Berlin. Stating the precise reasons for my demand, I asked an honorarium of 1000 thalers, and gave them clearly to understand that I would not prostitute myself so cheaply in Berlin again [as with the two earlier operas]. Presumably they will draw back; of that I must take my chance. If I come to anything, it can only be through terrorism." Compared with the fees demanded of such cities as Frankfort, Leipzig etc., the amount no doubt was large; but none too large for the richest Court in Germany, and positively ludicrous when one works it out at less than £1 sterling for each performance down to the

* It should come between Letters 81 and 82, and perhaps accompanied the dedicated copy of the *Lohengrin* full score, for which Liszt thanks his friend Aug. 23 (Letter 82). Some years ago I was shewn what purported to be this missing letter, but I foolishly omitted to take down any particulars at the time, and an expert having since declared it to be a forgery, it has passed out of my acquaintance's possession.—Aug. 14, Wagner tells Uhlig, "With regard to Berlin, I have written to Heine and Liszt about the devolution of my 'alter ego' to them"; but that letter to F. Heine also (written Aug. 11, according to another of even date to U.) is as yet a missing link. It would appear to have been in answer to an offer or suggestion of Heine's in respect of Berlin, for the letter of Aug. 9 to Uhlig says, "Thank Heine in my name for his tidings; probably they will not be so incorrect! If it comes to definite acceptance, however, I shall concern myself more closely with the cast."—W. A. E.

date of the composer's death.* Liszt certainly saw no exorbitance in it: "I entirely agree with your exceptional demand of 1000 thalers, for the same reasons that prompted you to make it" (Aug. 23). Those reasons are obvious: it must be made the interest of Berlin's pocket to *keep Tannhäuser* on its play-bill long enough to establish itself in public favour; only by giving it a respectable chance, could the theatre write off the lump sum for which it would have purchased the performing-rights.

The manners of a Court-theatre Intendant are unlikely to be so boorish as those of the mere speculative lessee of a municipal stage, but the red-tape at his command may prove more strangling. We are now to witness the first act of a spectacle in the *haute école* of dishing. On this occasion Wagner has a skilled diplomatist as aid; to little purpose.

Liszt, after approving his friend's demand, continues his letter thus (Aug. 23): "I thank you sincerely for the confidence you repose in me as regards the artistic preparations. Though a journey to Berlin would be somewhat inconvenient to me in present circumstances, I would gladly place myself at your disposal, on the sole condition that *the Royal Intendance invited me.*" It is a pity, and Wagner afterwards regretted it, that he did not make that stipulation at the first; but his reason for not doing so has already been stated, and one "scare" appeared sufficient to administer to the Berlin theatre at a dose. That they were seriously contemplating the opera, is pretty evident, for the *Neue Zeitschrift* of August 13 prints the following note, "According to the *National Zeitung* [the Berlin paper] Richard Wagner's *Tannhäuser* is being rehearsed at the Royal Opera-house in Berlin as a gala-performance for the 15th of October next, the birthday of the King of Prussia." The note is a little 'previous' as to the rehearsals, but clearly relies on semi-official authority, and the Zurich *Eidgenössische* reproduces it in its issue for the 20th.

Aug. 23 to Uhlig, "No answer from Berlin as yet." On the 30th, however, "The Berlin affair will be arranged, and by my

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* *Tannhäuser* was given for the 200th time at the Berlin Opera in September 1882: had Wagner's present terms been accepted, he would have been compounding at the princely rate of fifteen shillings for each Berlin performance in his lifetime.

falling back on the tantième system. Hülsen [the new Intendant there] means very honestly, and has made up his mind for Tannhäuser; under such circumstances I withdraw my vote of non-confidence in him. If all goes well, it's certain that I shall gain *more* than 1000 thalers through the tantième," i.e. 10% of the box-office receipts for each performance. Things had not been going altogether smoothly, notwithstanding, for Wagner writes Liszt a week later (Sept. 8), "I am not quite in calm water as yet with Berlin. Hülsen took my demand as a want of confidence in his personal disposition, and I have had to burden his conscience with my most regardless trust. All I now ask of him, is to certify in a few words that he fully recognises the difficulty of my position with Tannhäuser in Berlin and undertakes the production with the determination to overcome that difficulty. In that case I leave the whole question of honoraria in his hands." So little was the financial, Wagner's chief consideration, that he wrote to brother Albert—Johanna's father, then acting as his go-between in the Prussian capital—"I should even be prepared to make the right of performing my Tannhäuser opera a present to the Royal Court-theatre, and entirely to renounce all payment of a fee or tantième."*

Sept. 11 to Uhlig: "They have suddenly discovered that Tannhäuser can be given on none of the Royal birthdays." After Wagner's docility regarding the fee, it was a bad omen, so he writes Liszt next day: "It now looks very like not giving Tannhäuser in Berlin. The production has been *postponed*, and as I reckon that to mean that it would not come off before the end of January, whereas my niece Johanna [the "Elisabeth"] leaves Berlin again at the end of February, I have necessarily had to stand out for a guarantee of 10 performances this winter; not to run the risk of this my opera also vanishing after 3 to 4 performances, like the Dutchman and Rienzi, which accordingly

* See *Neue Zeitschrift* Sept. 24, '52, where—in rebuttal of rumours about "extravagant demands"—the sentence is quoted as "the exact words of a passage in a letter of Wagner's to his intermediary in Berlin." Was this the passage that Wagner (in that case, too late) warned Uhlig against publishing, lest it should annoy the Intendant to read in print a remark which Albert had withheld for fear of offending him? Cf. Letters 79 and 82 to Uhlig, Sept. 11 and 27.

were given out as *failures*. If this guarantee is denied me, I have already given instructions [to Albert] for withdrawal of the score." That was the greatest danger of all, so far as concerned the spread of his works; better no Berlin performance at all, than to have terror struck into the hearts of the lesser theatres just as they were really beginning to move at last.

It seemed so improbable that Hülsen would consent to such a guarantee, in view of all the facts, that Wagner considered the matter now practically done with, and began to turn his thoughts once more to his interrupted *Nibelungen* poem; with a sigh of relief at the supposed cessation of an interminable correspondence with "people so entirely without understanding of what I deem the essential points, so little able to leave the groove of routine," as Hülsen and his own brother had already shewn themselves. But a week later his prospects have altered again: "With Berlin I now am in order. Had my brother told me before, that Johanna remains there this time till the end of May, my objection, of course, would not have been raised. In addition, Hülsen sends me his written assurance that he hopes to give the opera more than 10 times between this and the Spring, and moreover pledges himself to put it on six times in the first month. In short, the matter is arranged: let Heine know. . . ." A half-ironic reference to Leipzig and his "quest of the Nibelungen-hoard, abandoning the Grail," is followed by the serious adjuration, "Don't think me commoner than I am: there still are a few noble sides to me! So, for instance, you may rest assured that I would joyfully have given up Berlin, if the Intendant there had not shewn himself so particularly amiable as he has to me," and so on (to U. Sept. 19).

Knowing what we do of the insolence of this same Intendant in the future,* it is engaging to find Wagner so very unsuspicious.

* In February 1863 von Hülsen writes von Bülow: "As regards the visit of Wagner which you suggest, I must quite openly and honestly confess to you that I do not desire it. I really cannot abnegate my personal feeling, and that feeling compels me to remark that, after our meeting at Dresden in May 1849, I have an objection to enter into any kind of personal relations with the above-named" (*Bülow's Briefe* III. 514). We possess no clue whatever to the incident of May '49 (time of the Dresden revolt), as Hülsen alone appears to have remembered it, and remembered it with waxing vehemence as years rolled on. To Wagner in 1852 it rather suggested an approach to a personal bond of union, so differently are "feelings" constituted!

Oct. 3 he writes Liszt, "Berlin is in order now, though Tannhäuser will probably not be put into full rehearsal before December. With such a long postponement, I will not frighten Herr von Hülsen with fresh conditions for the present: when the time draws near, I will beg you to reassure me once more whether you could manage the sacrifice and go to Berlin." Liszt answers by return of post—most unusual on his side of the correspondence—and reiterates his willingness: "But my efforts can lead to no sure result unless Herr von Hülsen gives me his entire confidence, and commissions me to make the necessary arrangements for the rehearsing and representing of Tannhäuser. I cannot go to Berlin as fly on the axle, and as such could render you no service at all there. Of course your works are higher than the present standard of *success*, yet I will wager 10 to 1 that if Tannhäuser or Lohengrin is rehearsed and set before the public properly, they are bound to have the most emphatic success. Wherever this should not follow, the blame lies solely and wholly in a faulty presentation. So if you wish to send me to Berlin as your attorney, I stand at your disposal, and pledge you my word that the whole world except your enviers and opposers, who may be reduced to a trifling minority, shall be content therewith." But Liszt will not be merely tolerated; he must have Hülsen's *summons* "black on white," before he will mix in the transaction: "In my opinion it is high time for Berlin to make place for your three operas, Tannhäuser, Lohengrin and the Flying Dutchman, and I have not the smallest doubt that their success will be complete if *the* affair is plied as it should be. Herr von Hülsen himself is sure to share this opinion soon—but on ordinary paths, and with the usual stage jog-trot, an extraordinary goal cannot be reached." Liszt accordingly, with his wide acquaintance with the ways of German courts, can see nothing presumptuous in the demand that external assistance be borrowed for such an occasion. Nor would it be so very different from that procured when *Rienzi* and the *Dutchman* were produced in Berlin: then the composer was summoned to complete the rehearsals and conduct the first performances; now he cannot be, as much through the fault of the King of Prussia as of anyone else, but his contemplated substitute is an artist of altogether exceptional standing.

So the die is cast: "I have accepted your intensely generous offer, and definitely written to Herr von Hülsen about your

summons to Berlin. I believe I have left nothing undone, on my side, to relieve him of any possible punctilio regarding his Kapellmeisters [Dorn and Taubert]; I have made it completely an affair of the heart between him and me, just as it is between ourselves" (Oct. 13). An affair of the heart, indeed! The author was really too confiding, so confiding that he tells Uhlig next day, "Everything at Berlin is in the best train: they're even thinking of Lohengrin to follow soon after. The Princess of Prussia lately saw it again (October 2),* and presumably has put Hülsen on hot bricks."

Hülsen was in no hurry to answer. Perhaps that was lucky, as it allowed Wagner to finish his *Rheingold* poem in some peace of mind (see next chapter). Scarcely have the Rhine-maidens uttered their "Traulich und treu ist's nur in der Tiefe: falsch und feig ist was dort oben sich freut!" than the thunderbolt falls. Nov. 9 to Liszt: "I'm so put out by what I have to tell you, that I wish I might never take up pen again. Hülsen has declined: I enclose his letter. He has no idea of what is at stake here, and never will it be possible to drum one into him. Personally this Hülsen is a thoroughly well-disposed man, but without a speck of comprehension of the cause which he ought to preside over: about Tannhäuser he treats with me as with *Flotow* about Martha. It's too disgusting!" A long recapitulation of the various phases of the transaction ends with the following: "At last I wrote to Hülsen himself, as perspicuously, impressively, as heartily and stirringly, as ever I am able: I pointed out to him that the possible hostility of the (utterly insignificant) Berlin Kapellmeisters was a mere nothing against the influence which *you* could exert in my favour; in short I wrote in such a tone that I could not conceive it possible to get a disobliging answer.—Now read the

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* The seventh performance. "Lohengrin was given last Saturday in honour of the Prince and Princess of Prussia. The theatre was very full again, and Frln Fromann, who had been expressly summoned to it by the Princess, will have written you about it" (L. to W., Oct. 7). Liszt returns to the subject in his letter of Dec. 27: "When the Prince of Prussia was here last, he spoke to me about my participation in getting up Lohengrin at Berlin. The Prince has a high opinion of you as poet and musician, and appeared to interest himself in the success of your works at Berlin." The Prince of Prussia subsequently became the first German Emperor, Wilhelm I.; his wife (Kaiserin Augusta) was a daughter of the Weimar Grand-ducal pair.

answer, and convince yourself that I have met my usual fate again: namely, of pouring my whole soul out, and its striking a wall of leather! I'm battling with myself what to do next. Give the whole thing up, and formally redemand my score, is what I should prefer.—As yet I've replied to neither Hülsen nor Albert with a line: what do you advise?—Or shall I look indifferently on, chuckle to myself if I can make 100 thalers by it—buy champagne and turn my back on the world? It's *abominable!*" Liszt does not answer for six weeks: * meantime his friend appears to have chosen the second alternative, that of callously looking on. It was a mistake, though Liszt endorses it: a little more "terrorism" would have been far more impressive, and could not have ended worse.

Thus much is clear: the failure of the present Berlin overtures can never be attributed to Wagner's "overbearingness." He had made concessions from the first; he had tried appeal after appeal to the Intendant's better feelings; he had proposed a delegate of whom any Court-theatre might be proud to avail itself; and now he has meekly submitted to the setting aside of that last proposal. That, at least, is the only way in which we can interpret his remark in a letter to Liszt of next January (13): "Hülsen's last promise was that Tannhäuser should go into rehearsal immediately after the Queen's birthday (Nov. 13, 52)." But Berlin promises had long been worthless: "Yesterday [Jan.

* It is not improbable that Liszt himself went to Berlin in November, with the hope of mending matters. We know that he was absent from Weimar awhile, since he attended a Dresden performance of *Tannhäuser* Nov. 28, though he forgets to mention either fact to Wagner. In his letter of Dec. 27, where he apologises for a "long silence (of about six weeks)," but assigns no definite reason for it, he employs the somewhat ambiguous expression "Wenn mich Herr v. Hülsen in Berlin nicht vermeiden wollte." Dr Hueffer, with an excess of freedom, has translated the clause "If Herr von Hülsen had invited me to Berlin" etc., but in the light of the context I should render it as follows: "If Herr v. Hülsen had not chosen to avoid me in Berlin, I might have persuaded him to bring out Lohengrin first," and so on. Liszt's letter then proceeds: "I am not surprised that Herr von Hülsen fights shy of calling me to Berlin . . . unfortunately I can do no more in the matter, and now must quietly await their stewing of Tannhäuser there.—Don't worry yourself in any case, and calmly objectify the whole course of events. If you have heard anything more definite about the Tannhäuser performances in Berlin, please send me a line, for I hear nothing here but contradictory *pourparlers* from time to time."

12, 53] I had news from Berlin through my niece, that Tannhäuser was not to be thought of for the present there, as the 'Feensee' and Flotow's 'Indra' were to be given first." His analogy had proved prophetic, and few people nowadays will refuse to share his indignation: "I have declared that I regard this cavalier treatment as an insult, look upon all previous negotiations as broken off, and insist on immediate restitution of the score.—My heart is consequently eased, and through Hülsen's fault I am relieved of all former concessions. . . . He may answer me how he likes, even offer to give Tannhäuser *at once*, after all; my mind is made up, to reply that in my present position I feel incapable of superintending so important a business as the production of my operas in Berlin, and *once for all* refer him to *you* for *everything*. . . . I consider it wisest, however, for you to have nothing whatever to do with Hülsen: he is simply a will-less tool. You will prefer—I fancy—to abide by your intercourse with the Prince and Princess of Prussia."

Before ringing the curtain down on the first act of the Berlin farce, we must inquire whose "will-less tool" this Hülsen was. Not of the King of Prussia, for we have already seen how that sovereign appreciated *Tannhäuser* in Dresden (ii, 209), for all the machinations of powers behind the scenes. The junior members of the Prussian royal house were in the composer's favour; the two "insignificant Kapellmeisters," Dorn and Taubert, could hardly make a stand against their chief, Herr Intendant von Hülsen. Our bugbear though the reader may dub him, the puller of the strings was obviously, as of yore, Generalmusikdirektor Meyerbeer. The windings of his policy we are never likely to be in a position to follow: whether he was absent from Berlin at first, for his annual course of the waters, and thus had not heard of the proposal earlier; or whether he deliberately rode the negotiations for a fall—the result was the same, a sounding insult to his dreaded rival.*

* Johanna Wagner writes to von Lüttichau, "Tannhäuser has been demanded back by my uncle. What they were unable to effect at Dresden, the same people have accomplished here, at fourth or fifth hand: the obstruction of the opera. For we now perceive quite plainly that Tannhäuser would not really have come off, even had it not been reclaimed by my uncle." Johanna was not yet aware that these "same people" had already stifled the Dresden revival (*vid. inf.*).

Liszt again shews *who* was in the right: "Your dissatisfaction with the delay in producing Tannhäuser is very comprehensible, and I consider you have done well to reclaim the score. Whether they will comply with your demand, is another question" (Jan. 23). By the 29th of January 53, a good fortnight after Wagner's ultimatum, the Berlin people had *not* returned the score, so far as Wagner knew, for he writes to Fischer on that day: "If by this evening you have not yet received back the score of Tannhäuser, I commission you to write at once to the General Intendance of Royal Plays in Berlin, and inform it that you have to request the immediate despatch of the said score, as I have already disposed of it elsewhere. It's to be hoped you have it already, though—for I now know for positively certain that they *never* meant to give *Tannhäuser* in Berlin." Whatever the nature of his private information,* there cannot be a shadow of doubt that he read the signs aright: thus to have delayed and delayed, with an "Elisabeth" about to leave for Paris, is the surest proof of insincerity in the Berlin counsels.

For the present the matter ends with the following passage in Wagner's next letter to Liszt (Feb. 11, '53): "You believed they would not return me my score from Berlin: for once you were wrong! The score was sent back at once, without a line from Hülsen or anybody else. Distasteful as such conduct is, since it shews me how the Berliners were minded toward Tannhäuser—yet I can't but be delighted at this issue: firstly, because it proves that, even had the opera been produced, it would have been lost in such circumstances—secondly, because the slate is thus wiped clean, and everything can now be committed to your faithful guard alone. The Berlin affair has accordingly become completely new; no obligation exists any longer, and henceforth you have an entirely free hand—provided I now may lay the matter in your hands for good and all, have nothing more to say to it myself, either by way of consent or refusal, and bear myself henceforward to Berlin as dead."

Months and months of correspondence, of waste of priceless time and energy, to arrive at this humbling result! How much unnecessary labour had been involved, may be judged from one minor detail, which shews how everything fell back on his hands

* See last footnote.

notwithstanding the kind offices of the Dresden trio of friends. "Let Meser know exactly what places now have the score"—he writes Uhlig the end of August 52. "I've made it a condition with every management that it shall obtain its textbooks through Meser; but if he doesn't bestir himself, devil a bit will they ask him. He is therefore to write and request orders from Berlin, Leipzig, Frankfort [etc.]. . . . For Berlin, if they mean to give the full ending with the Pilgrims' Chorus, special copies of the text, with a new last page—as in Härtel's edition*—will have to be pulled. That page can also be stereotyped for any theatres that may follow the example.—How it distresses me, that all this is in the hands of such a glue-boiler!" Sale of the textbooks would bring no profit to *him*, as the whole publication-rights (excluding the full scores) had passed into the hands of his creditors; so that his sole concern, apart from justice to them,† was the protection of his poem against the blunders of the mis-printer. But he was not to be left in peace even on this point, for almost the whole of another fairly long letter to Uhlig (Sept. 11) is devoted to the steps necessary to arrange with "a family Jacoby, endowed by the lamented King, for God knows how long, with the monopoly of printing and selling the textbooks of *all* operas" in Berlin. Down to such very small matters, then, there were vested interests to contend with, and we can fully commiserate the author when he ends his recital of the situation with the words: "My head is still bad, and my

* That is to say, at the end of the *Communication* as originally published. This constitutes what Tappert calls the "third ending" of *Tannhäuser* (see *Die Musik*, "Bayreuth number" 1902), but it really is nothing but a *restitution* of the Younger Pilgrims' chorus, which had been omitted earlier for reasons already stated.—It would seem that the "family Jacoby" eventually won the day, for Tappert further tells us: "I possess a shocking specimen of 'Airs and Songs from Tannhäuser' printed and sold in Berlin 1856 'by authority of the General Intendance.' 'Songs from Lohengrin' was still inscribed on the textbooks of the Berlin Opera in 1866 and 1875" (*loc. cit*). We used to know that sort of thing in the "palmy days" of Italian Opera in London, but scarcely expected it in the intellectual Prussian capital!

† In November they are considered once more: "If one could only keep an occasional watch on the fingers of that whining Meser! From time to time I have news that points to a *very wide* spread of my pfte-scores already, and it is becoming a little suspicious that the man still makes out he is getting no money from it. My creditors deserve a hiding, if they don't control him: *I* can do nothing further" (Letter 88 to Uhlig).

nerves are in a state of constant agitation, through this eternal friction with an invisible land outside."

Berlin was the only first-class capital to make so much as a feint of producing *Tannhäuser*, for years to come. "I begin to dread performances in the principal cities," says Wagner in the vortex of his experiences with it and Leipzig (to U., Nov. 27). "I shall never find the same goodwill there, as in the smaller towns, especially not among the self!-opera-composing Kapellmeisters." Vienna did not even breathe a word. Munich had gone the length of getting a production talked about: "Do you know anything as to Tannhäuser being given at Munich next autumn?" asks Wagner of Liszt in June—"*I* know nothing. It would not at all ill-beseem Herr Dingelstedt to think of such a thing!" Dingelstedt sent his factotum to Wiesbaden, as we have seen; so pleased was the man with the opera, that he assured Wagner of a speedy production. "Self-composing" Franz Lachner, however, soon scotched that snake with a performance of the overture accompanied by a travesty of Wagner's programme (298*n ant.*), and next February the composer writes Liszt: "To theatres such as that of Munich and so on I should have to refuse my operas, even if they applied for them, as the Kapellmeisters there would find nothing better to do than to ruin me right out."

With middle-sized cities we already are more at ease. Hamburg, one of the first to be thought of by Liszt in 1850, does not strictly come into our present reckoning, as its production of *Tannhäuser* is deferred till November 53; but then it gives fifteen performances before the end of the year (with an advance of 50 louis d'or to the composer, on account of royalties). Frankfort, which had been hanging fire so long, amends its ways with the transference of the directorship to Wagner's old Riga friend Johann Hoffmann, and Jan. 13 of the new year Wagner is able to write Liszt: "At Frankfort Tannhäuser comes out next Saturday: the Kapellmeister has written me, and entertains hopes of a good success," which the opera appears to have achieved. Riga itself affords a point of interest, as "the text-book of Tannhäuser must be submitted to the censor in S. Petersburg before the director can buy the opera" (to U., Sept. 52). The S. Petersburg police were less prurient, or politically-bigoted, than the

Austrian; for "In Russia, Riga, the production has been allowed to take place!!"*—Wagner tells Liszt next February, in the same breath as of the Prague censor's prohibition, not to be removed till Nov. 54.

One city of "second rank" remains to be dealt with, another bright spot in the chequered career of this opera. Breslau was the first large town to mount the work, anticipating much smaller Wiesbaden by a month or so. "Dresden, had I remained there, would have been the grave of my art. What am I to say, on the contrary, to Weimar, Schwerin, Breslau and Wiesbaden? Everywhere the *first* performance hit the nail, which Dresden never really touched *at all*" (to U., Nov. 27). In the thick of the unpleasantness with Leipzig and Berlin, "I have just been interrupted by the postman, who has brought me an immense delight, a letter from the Breslau Kapellmeister about the enormous success which the first performance of Tannhäuser [Oct. 6] has made there. The man [Seydelmann] is quite beside himself with joy, and I myself am so overpowered by it that I can write you no more to-day, as the needful calm has been altogether robbed me, and this time in so agreeable a way." So writes Wagner to Uhlig Oct. 10, continuing his jubilation next day. In the success itself there seems to have been no drop of bitterness, but—and here comes out the tragedy of his situation—in three days' time he writes again, "Something must happen, to tear me from this everlasting brain-life. No joy holds out, not even the Breslau news—for with *news* alone I cannot glut myself. How it is to be otherwise, I'm unable to conceive, since at no price can I petition for my amnesty! Yet I know that an excursion to Weimar or Berlin, to hear my operas and do something practical for them, would have a very beneficial effect upon me."

With "news" he had to content himself, and be thankful when the news was so good as this time. And its effect is more lasting, even on himself, than he had anticipated in the first reaction; for it has won to his side one of the most famous of the musical writers of the older school, a man whose treatises on Bach were the first to introduce that grand old master's choral works to

* First Riga performance Jan. 18, 1853; sixteen repetitions in the first six months.

English students:* "Mosewius has written me most touchingly; he has also signed his name to an article on Tannhäuser in the Breslau newspaper" (to U., Nov. 1). "The article itself is of no great moment"—Wagner explains a fortnight later, in reply to Uhlig's inquiry—"but it is just Mosewius' signature that gives it interest.—More recently I have fabulous tidings from Breslau. Michaelson [the agent] had already written about an eighth performance having taken place there, with a house full to bursting; and now the Moritz tells me (from Wiesbaden) that a lady friend has just written her from Breslau that in a little over a month Tannhäuser has been given there 12 times, with the house full every night. Can it be *possible?*" It was splendid news, particularly as it accompanied the tidings of the Wiesbaden success, to which Frau Moritz herself must have contributed; nor was her lady friend's arithmetic far out, for "Seydelmann has just written me that they have really given Tannhäuser 11 times down to Sunday last [Nov. 21]—in spite of a longish interruption through illness — and that with constantly full houses and unabated applause." Eleven times in six weeks, with three more to be added to those by end of the year! And a work which the Dresden and Leipzig papers had hounded down but seven years since! Such a total change of scene is scarcely credible, and to Wagner least of all. Yet it is a solid fact, and early in December the Breslau theatre is clamouring for the *Dutchman* score; an example followed "urgently" by the originator of the present Hailstorm, little Schwerin, some two weeks later.† After the very creditable tale of "nine full houses" by mid-September—"if Fétis père but knew it!" says Wagner—Schwerin had really wanted *Lohengrin;* but, as the composer explains to F. Heine, "I have withdrawn Lohengrin everywhere for this winter, to open the door to it in the next."

* See Grove's *Dictionary of Music.*

† First performances of the *Dutchman*, Breslau Jan. 26, Schwerin Apr. 6, 1853. Between these came Weimar on the 16th of February; then no fresh towns that year. 1854 brought Wiesbaden (July) and Frankfort (Dec.). Not till 1857 is the list of *Dutchman* cities swelled by Hanover, Prague and Carlsruhe—the last to take that work up in the fifties. At no time has this earliest of Wagner's "romantic operas" approached the popularity of its two successors, and the reason must be sought in itself; for its dramatic tendency and structure are far more akin than theirs to the great dramas of the post-Dresden period.

So the ice at last had broken in Germany, and mainly owing to the exertions of individual artists with whom Wagner had come into close personal contact. Thus another tiny town, Freiburg-im-Breisgau (Baden), owed its "frantic enthusiasts" to that talented young conductor Schöneck whom the composer had "drilled into his stuff" at Zurich last Spring.* The more important centres, on the other hand, with the threatened interests of their music-making mediocrities, stood aloof until forced into the channel by a gust of popular feeling.

And abroad? England and Italy were far too much of one mind in their operatic doings, to come into the net as yet. But Paris? There was a tremulous stir there again; the dry bones were—quaking. "If Fétis père but knew!" Meyerbeer and his friends had committed a grave error in tactics, which, had Wagner only chosen to profit by it, might have turned out badly for the attacking party. It was last summer. July 2, '52, Wagner writes Uhlig: "Have you heard anything about the articles of Fétis père in the *Gazette musicale* concerning me? I had been told something of it here, and at the Museum I have already come across 3 leading articles 'Richard Wagner' etc., etc., to be followed by another big instalment, so it seems. Meyerbeer is moving at last, afraid of my propaganda reaching Paris.—*The ass!* The caricature of me, with which Fétis is regaling the French, is complete: he quotes in the vilest fashion from my 'Preface,' and makes it appear that the fact of my operas having always *failed*—instead of convincing me that the fault lay in myself—had made me seek the cause in our present conditions, and *for that reason* I had become a revolutionary. Against a few of his most brazen lies a 'little protest' would not be ill-timed: relying as ever on 'accurate intelligence,' he asserts e.g. that my Tannhäuser so completed its fiasco with its *third* Dresden performance that it had been *impossible* to bring it forward again; and so on. Here Reissiger (whom F. visited a few years since in Dresden) has undoubtedly hoaxed him: only I'm afraid my own accounts (in that Preface) may also have misled some idiots; when I expressed dissatisfaction with the success of my operas, naturally I didn't mean outward success (could I have desired to

* See Letters 88 to Uhlig and 19, 20 and 23 to F. Heine.

be *more* than 'called' at every performance of Tannhäuser?), but simply its character, which made me feel that the *essence* of my work had *not* been grasped."

This autumn he was to discover the exciting cause of the recent onslaught. "I've a violent cold in the head: if I could attend to it properly, I might expect some benefit from it; but I'm saddled with another virtuoso, Vieuxtemps, whom I know from earlier times and like very much, only I have to keep him company every day."* No: Vieuxtemps was not the cause, but "With him is Liszt's agitator, my Paris acquaintance Belloni. Through the latter I learn at last how the Paris journals came to fall upon me tooth and nail. Belloni had been instructed to sow Liszt's brochure on my operas broadcast in Paris, and naturally view-halloo was raised in the camp of Israel. So Belloni tells me that my name is uncommonly notorious in Paris just now, and if I would but come there, I might be sure of a noise. To tell the truth, I had already thought of taking my wife to Paris for a fortnight's amusement—if funds permitted; I even had an idea of hiring an orchestra—if I could manage the cost—to try over a few bits of Lohengrin for myself and a handful of friends, so that I really might hear *something* from it at last.—This fuss, of course, rather shakes my plan than makes it agreeable to me" (to U. Sept. 27, '52).

True to his instincts of the entrepreneur, Liszt's former secretary presses his point so hard that Wagner for a while begins to waver: "Belloni takes up a deal of my time," he writes four days later. "He's bent on getting me to Paris, where I might make a terrific sensation just now. As he cannot have at me with anything else, he's trying the bait of Tannhäuser translated for the Grand Opéra. Herwegh, who is much taken with the idea, wants to make the prose-translation. One thing sets me tingling: Roger (from all I know of him) would be the

* Henri Vieuxtemps and Belloni (as his concert-agent?) spent about a fortnight in Zurich. In the *Eidgenössische* of Sept. 20 Wagner advocates Vieuxtemps' coming Zurich concert with all the warmth exhibited in two of his Paris news-letters eleven years before (*P.* VIII. 116 and 127-9). Here again the French violinist follows on the track of the German, for Liszt had been informed last April, "By the way: Ernst has been giving concerts here, and the prospect of the Flying Dutchman—so he tells me—has determined him to remain in Switzerland till the end of this month. So you would meet him too."

only singer who could earn my thanks as Tannhäuser: he has the stuff for it, and also knows German. Then, *Johanna* in Paris. You see, it's beginning to rumble—though I wouldn't set much on it as yet; so keep the rumbling to yourself for the present." As the letter winds up with "Peps is just playing the bassoon," we may still regard this embryonic Paris scheme as more or less of a joke, on Wagner's side. It might easily have become a reality, however, had he taken it in sufficient earnest to persuade Johanna Wagner to insert a little clause in the contract into which she was just entering with the Paris Opéra, a stipulation for appearance in her uncle's opera.

Oct. 3, two days after the above to Uhlig, Wagner tentatively lays the question before Liszt: "Belloni, as you know, is here. He has been talking a deal about Paris to me again, and to my amazement I learn that you still have plans of world-conquest for me in your head: you indefatigable!! Against a translation of Tannhäuser I certainly should not have much to say, especially as I might expect *Roger* to be the best Tannhäuser I know of: *Johanna* also—I admit, 'twould not be bad. Herwegh also is egging me on to Paris. He wants to prepare a (highly-coloured) prose translation of the poem.—But, naturally, I cannot think seriously of the thing as yet." After a few sentences that entirely disconnect the train of thought, we again have, "My desolation here is gradually becoming unbearable. If I can manage it, I shall winter awhile in Paris: how I should like to hear something from Lohengrin for once on a good orchestra!"

Liszt's reply is most puzzling. You may remember his mysterious hint of a year ago, as to the ulterior object of the *Lohengrin et Tannhäuser* brochure; an object "which neither you nor your friends have been able to divine," and which would take a little time to attain (217 *ant.*). Surely Belloni has been an authorised instrument toward attainment of that object by distribution of the brochure *en masse* in Liszt's erst-championed Paris; yet, without a word of disclaimer, Liszt suddenly withholds approval of its logical consequences: "A Paris production of Tannhäuser is not to be thought of at present, and, extraordinary as is the confidence I repose in your extraordinary work (though Lohengrin is still dearer to me personally), I cannot but attach some weight to my experience of Parisian opera-productions, and regard the incompatibility

of Tannhäuser with present *operatic expedients* as detrimental to success. Germany must be the first to lay hold, for you have alike the distinction and the misfortune to be an arch-German poet and composer. So far as I know your works, I still think *Rienzi* would best reward a French arrangement.—But don't let that give you any useless trouble.—Create your Nibelungen, and worry yourself about nothing besides. All the rest will follow, when the time comes." Why, then, had the brochure been scattered broadcast over Paris? Was our old friend the "longue vue" responsible for that particular 'grain of Bellonianism"? Or was it nothing but the voice of Princess Wittgenstein that had spoken through the pen of Liszt when Paris was so strenuously advocated two and three years since? An enigma worthy of the Sphinx.—Whatever its answer, the abortive Paris *Tannhäuser* is dropped at once. With the Berlin complication still on his hands, Wagner would hardly be anxious to go through a repetition of the whole story at another metropolis; moreover, it was on the money to be reaped from Berlin that he obviously had counted for the Paris jaunt, and that source of profit failed him. Still more decisive would be the harmony of his own most ardent wish with Liszt's advice, to brush aside everything that might hinder the completion of his tetralogy.

Amid all these preparations, and talks of preparations for the spread of *Tannhäuser*, fall two revivals, entirely opposed alike in spirit and result.

Since Wagner's departure the Dresden Court-theatre had sunk into its old stagnation, and worse than its old insignificance. Reissiger's "jubilee," of 25 years' service, had been celebrated thus: "I hear that the grace of the Lord has been shed on you all. Lipinski a diamond ring, Reissiger an increase of 200 thalers, the bandsmen gold and silver medals! O who would not wish to be there?" (to U., July 2). Wagner himself had long been succeeded in the post of second Kapellmeister by a musician of the name of K. A. Krebs, the same who conducted *Rienzi* at Hamburg in 1844 (see vol. ii, 61 and 137). Of this mediocrity young Bülow draws a witty sketch in a letter of Dec. 51 to Raff: "The score of *Alfred* reposes with Krebs, who hasn't looked at it yet; he can't read it, it's too

difficult for him. Moreover his laziness stands in the same ratio to that of Reissiger as Beethoven to the composer Singer. Lipinski has done his utmost to get this * * * to go over the opera with him at the piano. . . . Perhaps when his wife [Michalesi] has lost her voice, they'll send this pair of amphibia [*Krebs* = crayfish] back to where they may be nearer salt water." Krebs and Reissiger were eternally at war—such a happy family was that of the Dresden theatre at all times—and perhaps to this may be attributed the frequent rumours that *Lohengrin* was to be produced at last there; rumours which evoke continual protests from Wagner against such tampering with his intellectual property.* In any case, nearly four years having elapsed since an opera of Wagner's had appeared on the Dresden stage,† Reissiger's sudden ardour to revive *Tannhäuser* appears to have been due to a wish to outtrump his present colleague by winning to his own side all his former one's adherents alike in theatre and public.

For the true inwardness of the situation we must revert a moment to the autumn of last year. "Don't be vexed with me"—Wagner writes Fischer Sept. 51—"for spoiling the pleasure a Dresden Lohengrin would certainly have given you. Reflect that nothing can give *me* pleasure now, save what is *genuine*. This whole resolve of Lüttichau's is not genuine; 'tis a blend of a thousand kinds of 'I should like to,' not the settled will of a man who knows his mind and *what* is at stake. Or is Reissiger's wish to produce my opera, forsooth, a genuine one? Away with all these turncoats!" Reissiger we may now leave on one side; if he had really wished to do his late colleague a good turn, the least we might have expected of him would be to write and consult the exile's wishes. But Lüttichau—and the King?

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* See p. 45 *antea;* also Letter 1 to Roeckel (Aug. 51), Letters 30, 32 and 46 to Uhlig (Aug., Sept., and Nov., 51).

† Apropos of the "Historical programme" of a concert in aid of the Stage-choir's pension-fund, when the Sailors' Chorus from the *Dutchman* had been given, Wagner writes to chorus-master Fischer early in 1852: "You have touched me much by your sly insertion of the thin end of the wedge, and sincerely do I thank you for this proof of your great affection. I couldn't help laughing at the programme you sent me. It's to be hoped, however, you had no thought of an ulterior result"—see p. 248 *antea*.

"I should like to" is fully descriptive of this pair of weak but well-meaning mortals. Lüttichau had no personal aversion to Wagner in days gone by, but would have liked to get rid of a troubler of the slumbers of the Dresden theatre: he then confined himself to threats and petty insults, as he would also like to retain an undoubtedly brilliant officer. Lüttichau would have liked to give *Lohengrin* of late, to shew there was no ill-feeling; but did not like to do the straightforward thing, and negotiate for its performing rights. Now he would like to restore at least one of the "rebel's" earlier operas to his repertory, and thus replenish the court-theatre's coffers: this time he rises to the height of his courage—but dares not face the consequences.

And so with Friedrich August II. Not for an instant can it be supposed that Lüttichau would have arranged for a revival of *Tannhäuser* without his sovereign's consent; in the circumstances, it would have been as much as his position at Court was worth. The Royal consent must therefore be taken for granted; a well-meant, but undignified and inconsequent act of grace. If the King of Saxony believed Wagner to have been sufficiently implicated in the past Dresden revolt to merit a life-long banishment, he should not have allowed a single one of the exile's operas to be again turned into a means of drawing money from the pockets of his faithful lieges; if he did not so believe, he should have pardoned him at once, *before*, or simultaneously with, its revival at an institution partly supported by the Civil List. It is absurd to talk of separating the artist from the man, in such a case: even if you gave *Tannhäuser* without the name of its composer, the audience could not help mentally adding to the playbill "By Richard Wagner, formerly Kapellmeister of this place, but now under warrant of arrest for high treason"; and that at a *court* theatre! Had it been a man, and not a puppet on the throne, he would have said: Either I grant an amnesty to my former servant, or my theatre remains closed to his works. Let us be charitable, and assume that Friedrich August II. seriously entertained an idea of the former alternative: it would confer a great significance on this "event." But there we have the weakness inherent in "I should like to!" The revival flickers out, or is extinguished; a domineering Minister of State exacerbates the warrant of arrest a few months later.

It was scarcely with feelings of unbounded joy, that Wagner could regard the new "event," since his Guide had been a "protest against the idea that the Dresden representation had ever satisfied" him (to U., Sept. 27). If he himself had been unable to obtain a really adequate rendering there, even with the Devrient as one of his exponents, it was little likely that such would reward the efforts of second-rate female singers and a conductor who, always seeking in the olden days to undermine his influence, had never shewn the smallest comprehension of his aims. So we find him writing Uhlig Aug. 30, '52: "If Tannhäuser is really coming out again in Dresden, give Fischer three or four copies of the brochure, to be handed in my name to Herr von Lüttichau, whom I would beg to direct thereto the close attention of the conductor and regisseur in particular.—Had I but a means of stopping the Dresden performance entirely!" A fortnight later, "Do all you can to prevent Tannhäuser in Dresden!" A week after that: "Reissiger's resorting to 'cuts' at once, is exquisite. If you but knew how indifferent this Dresden performance is to me! The best way of quashing it, would be if a certain person were given my brochure to read: probably one would feel offended by it, and let my opera drop: I know my people!—*Has Lüttichau had the copies?*" Even Tichatschek, however—if *he*, not Lüttichau, were the "certain person"—was not so deeply wounded as to throw over his part; apparently the others treated Wagner's strictures as no direct concern of theirs; the rehearsals went placidly on. Oct. 11: "The Dresden Tannhäuser doesn't affect me at all; with the ending, too, they may do as they please. Dresden can be of no further help to me: indeed it never helped, but rather harmed me; even that, however, it can no longer do! it can only sink still deeper in my indifference. Enough—my memories of the Dresden Tannhäuser are a nightmare: with regard to the new presentation I now have come to a complete blank. So give yourself no trouble about the ending—at least, for my sake; if you wish to impress on these people their effrontery towards myself, let that be a matter apart." Finally the Coriolanus mood is softened a little by news from Uhlig, evidently respecting the attitude of Lüttichau: "What you write me about X begins to touch me, especially the retention of the new ending—which X never liked" (Oct. 14).

So, after a pause of six-and-forty months, *Tannhäuser* once more takes the Dresden boards October 26, 1852, before a house filled to the last seat, in part by real enthusiasts, in part by anticipators of a disturbance that never occurred. Wagner himself was left in almost total darkness at first: "Please see that the family of my wife receives three tickets for the third circle, next Tannhäuser performance. Yours must go to the amphitheatre.—If a sempstress hadn't written about it to my wife at once, I should know as good as nothing yet of the representation"—so he writes Uhlig, Nov. 1. Even on the 10th: "The Dresden 'event' has become of special interest to me for this reason, that, with all my 'friends,' I have received almost no news at all about it. Beyond yourself there was only a sempstress—as said —who reported it to my wife; otherwise, if I omit the abominable correspondence in Brockhaus's paper,* I should know nothing at all." Manifestly alluding to that Royal "I have no memory for ingratitude" colported in the *D.A.Z.*, he resumes: "My 'ingratitude' might almost have led me to take pen in hand to a third person [the King?], and ask quite calmly if my 'thanks' for 'favours' had not been quite simply rendered through *the very thing* for which I received them—namely through my artistic activity in Dresden, and so on. Only, I've no more relish for such musty stuff." Assuredly, if "ingratitude" is to be the cry, it falls back on the Royal House itself; but presumably in those days one was expected to be grateful if one escaped with a whole skin. Before the letter is completed, however, another reaches him from his correspondent, containing Dresden information that would have very much assisted us to an estimate of the political position there, for Wagner replies: "Regarding the Tannhäuser news I'm beginning to develop quite an admiration for Lüttichau's revolutionary attitude: it really takes a species of —affection, to make head against such a storm. That the root of the matter is being brought to light on this occasion, is gradually making the Dresden 'event' quite interesting to me. God's ways are truly wonderful!"

If Lüttichau made a certain stand against the opposition of those more royalist than the King himself, it was not long before

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* Three differently-shaded reports to the *Deutsche Allg. Ztg*, all dealing more or less with the "rebel" question, will be found in the Appendix. 5 of

he was overpowered. We read in the *Neue Zeitschrift* of Nov. 12, "Four performances of *Tannhäuser* have taken place at Dresden already"—in the same paragraph with the information that this opera had been given "seven times at Breslau during the first three weeks"—with a significant omission of further details, as to the Dresden attendance and so on. The omission is supplied by Wagner's letter to Uhlig of the 27th: "Do you know, the Dresden resumption of Tannhäuser has had nothing but an uncomfortable effect upon me? By every token I may convince myself that *now*, *as well*, my Tannhäuser has had no unequivocal success at Dresden. . . . All this came back to me again, when I heard from you that the *second* performance was by no means over-full. And now I chance to read in a (certainly unintelligent and unkind) report in the Hamburger Theaterzeitung that the unusual interest of the public in the first performance would be chiefly attributable to the expectation of some scandal or other. At least that would account for the subsequent representations being nothing like so largely attended." In confirmation whereof, more than a fortnight elapses between the fourth and fifth performances. Nevertheless that fifth performance, which occurred on the day after the above was penned, is thus recorded in the *Neue Zeitschrift* (Dec. 10): "On the 28th November Wagner's *Tannhäuser* was given for the fifth time, to a house quite full. Liszt attended this performance.—It is said that Chorus-director Fischer of Dresden has been to Weimar, to attend a performance of Wagner's *Lohengrin* there. People hope that this masterpiece also will be mounted in Dresden, so soon as a few obstacles are removed, which still are offered to Wagner's works by certain personages in Dresden." If the little paragraph was written by Uhlig, it was his very last contribution to the press; but in any case its news about Fischer is correct, as we shall see in a moment; wherefore we may accept the remainder of its statements, and in particular that about "certain personages."* Over *Tannhäuser* they certainly triumphed, for it was replaced on the shelf for another five years or so—and Meyerbeer henceforth rules the roast. That opens up another vista, but we must content ourselves with the bald statement of the historian

* See footnote to page 386 *antea*.

Robert Prölss: "Down to 1858 Meyerbeer completely dominated the repertory of the Dresden Opera. With his usual enterprise [!] Lüttichau had succeeded in obtaining from his friend, the master, the right to the first performance of the *Prophète* in Germany; which took place under Meyerbeer's own control on the 30th January 1850, with the greatest success, and was repeated 86 times to the end of 1861. In 1855 his *Étoile du Nord*, in 1860 his *Dinorah*, were brought out here. Only from 1858 onward did he have to contend with Wagner for supremacy, and finally to yield it to him" (*Gesch. des Dresd. Hoftheaters* pp. 601-2).

The fortunes of Lüttichau's belated *Lohengrin* project have still to be followed. In this case the fiatus came from Wagner himself. We have already alluded to earlier protests, but still the project had been nursed by Dresden friends against his will; and, though he knew nothing of it at the time, the *Neue Zeitschrift* had been right in its report of Fischer's visit to Weimar. We may therefore endorse Wagner's solution of the silence of two of his old Dresden comrades regarding the actual performances of *Tannhäuser:* "I believe I can now explain the reason for Fischer and Heine not writing me"—he tells Uhlig in his letter of Nov. 10, between the two passages quoted p. 399 *ant.*—"for the *D. A. Z.* speaks positively of an intended Lohengrin-production in Dresden.* Now, these two old fellows know that I won't consent to that production; in order that I may not stop it, they mean to write me nothing about it, which they would be obliged to if they wrote me at all. You, however, I pray let me know exactly what you can discover: if it's a fact, I'm determined to write to Lüttichau himself and lodge a protest. I will not have the distress of knowing this opera maltreated by Krebs or Reissiger now: they shan't do it before Lohengrin has been given at other good places, where I can exert some influence over the conductors."

The commonest prudence dictated some such step, for the fate of *Lohengrin* might easily have been sealed by failure at

* "Dresden, Oct. 31. There is sure ground for stating that the tactful behaviour of the Dresden public at the performance of Richard Wagner's 'Tannhäuser' has moved the Intendant of the Court-theatre to decide on mounting that composer's 'Lohengrin' also in the immediate future" (*D. A. Z.* Nov. 3, '52).

a leading theatre, and we shall learn in time the harm it actually suffered through its Leipzig "murder" a year or so hence. And here we may cite a letter to old Fischer of April 56: "It has been a standing dream with me since ever so long, that I was in Dresden again, but hidden away in your house; and just as secretly you brought me to the theatre, where I heard one of my operas, so entirely wrong that I grew wild and wanted to protest aloud, but in great alarm you kept on stopping me." That dream was a parable, the interpretation whereof would be simple enough, even were it not already contained in a letter to F. Heine of the period we now are treating: "Your and Fischer's visit to Weimar has immensely surprised me: how the Devil came you two old boys to make such a sprinting tour?! There must have been something in the wind!*—Your remarks on the Weimar performance [*Lohengrin*] have interested me in the utmost degree: I saw the whole thing as with living eyes, and in my conjecture I quite agree with you as to the character of the execution.—Hearty thanks! What Genast has left unheeded, of all my hints and specifications, appears to be hair-bristling. And yet papa Fischer blames me so for my Guide to Tannhäuser:—so he still imagines it should be my sole concern to have my operas performed at all costs, and that I *therefore* act 'unwisely' to make too many demands against use and wont!! Surely I ought to feel highly ashamed, to be still so misunderstood on the most vital point even by you two. I care **absolutely nothing** for my things being **given**: my only care is, that they **so** be given as I thought them out; whoever either won't or can't, should leave them alone. That is my whole opinion, and Fischer has not grasped it *yet?* O the hardened sinner!!—Nay, greet him heartily: best thanks for his letter" (end of Dec. 52). The blend of deadly earnest and homely banter is characteristic of the writer, and shews

* This Weimar trip of the Dresden scenic artist and his colleague the chorus-master is of some importance, as proving that Lüttichau had gone far beyond mere talk, with his *Lohengrin* scheme. Liszt incidentally refers to it in his letter of Dec. 27: "With Heine and Fischer, who were here for the last performance, I spoke about this glorious drama [*Lohengrin*], to my mind the highest and most perfect work of art." For many reasons, unnecessary to set forth, that "last performance" must have been the seventh, i.e. Oct. 2; so that Wagner had been kept completely in the dark as to this friendly plot for nearly three months, apparently by Lüttichau's orders.

exactly the footing on which he stood with his simpler artistic associates: on that side he had no fear of being "misunderstood." His stage-directions, too, he knew would be carried out faithfully by Heine, his choruses properly got up by Fischer; whilst Tichatschek, however at fault with Tannhäuser, would be his ideal Lohengrin—the part, in a sense, having been written for him. But how could he possibly trust Reissiger with this delicate score? And the other one, the crustacean? It was out of the question.

So the hopes of his friends must be dashed. The last of his many messages to Uhlig in this connection had been, "As I am certain that Dresden will *harm* my Lohengrin if it comes out there now, I shall do my best to stop it as soon as I know for certain" (Nov. 27). "Naturally I have no intention of appealing to the law-courts in this matter," he had told Uhlig mid-November; but the Dresden Intendant's sense of justice might at last be directly appealed to. Liszt accordingly is informed Jan. 13, 1853, "I have written to *Lüttichau*, and deprecated *Lohengrin* there now,* as I have not the needful confidence in either of his Kapellmeisters." How the deprecation might have fared a few months earlier, we need not inquire: Wagner's request quite harmonised with the amenities of Lüttichau's present position; the Intendant had no desire to embroil himself further with the reactionary party at Court, and *Lohengrin* was therefore laid aside till August 1859, nearly twelve years from the date of its completion.

In one respect alone was the brief Dresden revival of *Tannhäuser* a gain to Wagner. It brought into the ranks a man whom the master in later days was fond of calling "the oldest Wagnerian," a man whose contributions to the public press for over thirty years remained unequalled in their service to the cause, a man we shall presently find included in the Weimar squadron.† "The article from Dresden in the *Neue*

* Or, as Dr Hueffer translates it, "asked him not to perform *Lohengrin* there at present," the original being "*und mir den Lohengrin jetzt dort verbeten.*" One might perhaps have taken "*verbeten*" as a misreading for "*verboten*" (forbidden), had it not been for the reflexive use of the "*mir*," which gives a much milder tone to the request.

† At first he employed the anagrammatic signature "Hoplit," which young Bülow capped by adopting that of "Peltast."

Zeitschrift, on Tannhäuser, is very good; who ever is the author?" So Uhlig is asked, with reference to the first half of a review, which had appeared in that journal November 12. Brought to a conclusion in the issue for the 19th, its author was Richard Pohl (born at Leipzig 1826). Previously acquainted with Wagner's aims through nothing but his *essays* and the personal intimacy of Uhlig, this young writer on music and the fine arts was converted by the Dresden *Tannhäuser* of 1852 into one of the most demonstrative admirers of his dramatic genius. "What had at first been a conclusion from the convincing deductions in Wagner's writings, from now became for me an affair of the heart, an article of belief," says Pohl in an "Autobiographic" essay. Another instance of the seed, sown by the wayside, that fell into good ground and brought forth fruit an hundredfold.

To the fifth and last of the Dresden performances of *Tannhäuser* in 1852 came Liszt, as the *Neue Zeitschrift* has just told us. Nowhere had he been passive witness of that opera before, and it is to be presumed that he wished to profit by a hint or two for the Weimar revival now under way. On minor points of staging and grouping the visit may have been of use to him, since the author's traditions would hardly be effaced as yet; for the general intention of the work he had a far safer guide to follow, that Promemoria itself. "I have given your brochure to our new artistic manager, Herr Marr, and both of us will try to follow your instructions to the best of our ability. I am very glad you have published this paper, and advise you to do something similar for Lohengrin and the Flying Dutchman," he writes his friend Oct. 7; and again, the day after the restoration, "I read your brochure with great interest, and, I hope, some benefit to our performance. I am delighted to see that I had already guessed several of your tempo-directions, and many of your intentions had been realised here in advance."

The Weimar revival took place on the 26th December 1852. Apparently the orchestra had previously been improved, for, whereas a year before this date Liszt had complained of choir and orchestra alike being insufficient, a year after it he has only to complain of the choir; rather a vital element in *Tann-*

häuser, though. Other matters, besides the new ending, had been set to rights—but let Liszt speak for himself: "Yesterday occurred a performance of your Tannhäuser, with overflowing house and *abonnement suspendu*. New scenery had been painted for the second ending, and for the first time I also had the whole finale in the second act (a glorious, masterly finale), and the whole prayer of Elisabeth in the third act, given without a cut.* The effect was extraordinary, and I fancy you would not have been dissatisfied with the whole performance. Therewith I have celebrated a complete triumph for the cause; for, now that success has been decisive, I may candidly confess that nobody here was too pleased at having to proceed to the laborious study of that finale, or the substitution of the second ending, and the discussing of the pros and cons of this change dragged on for several months. Why have another Tannhäuser, people said, than the one we are used to?—Wagner himself sanctioned the cuts, at Dresden, and acknowledged their advantage. Several persons who had seen the Dresden Tannhäuser declared outright that our representation was much better, and would only lose by the new ending and the retention of the whole finale, etc., etc.—To all these excellent arguments I had but one reply: 'For Weymar it is a duty and a point of honour, gradually [!] to restore Wagner's works to the best possible accordance with the wishes and intentions of the composer.' And look you! in spite of all preceding chatter, the unequivocal success of yesterday has entirely borne out my assertion."

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* The original Weimar cut in act ii must have been appalling, for even now —mirabile dictu—the very passage on which Wagner had *insisted* alike in his long letter of May and in the Guide, is still omitted at Weimar! There is no other interpretation to be put on Liszt's remark of a twelvemonth hence (Dec. 13, '53): "Next Sunday we have Tannhäuser here. I have coached Liebert in the part, and believe he will succeed in it. The whole finale of the second act will be given—also the second ending with the re-apparition of Venus; and on an early opportunity I shall have the sixteen bars in the Adagio of the second-act finale (which Tichatschek cut for you, I believe) copied out, if you wish it. However, it always needs a little consideration, to make such changes here." As the "Zum Heil den Sündigen" passage (just 18 bars) is the only solo in this Adagio, there can be no doubt of its being the one Liszt means. And that performance toward the end of 1853 was but the sixteenth of *Tannhäuser* at Weimar in five years, even Leipzig having already beaten it in one.

This letter of Liszt's—in which we have the remark, "You are already very popular in the various hotels at Weimar, where it is no easy matter to find a bed on the day of performance of your operas"—further announces his intention to give the absolutely first of what we now term Wagner-cycles. The *Dutchman* is to have its première on the Grand Duchess's next birthday, Feb. 16, '53, with a repetition on the 20th, to be followed by *Tannhäuser*, with *Lohengrin* to round the cycle on the 26th.

It is chiefly to this Weimar preparation of the *Holländer* that we owe the "Remarks on performing the Flying Dutchman opera" (*P.* III. 209-17), which we have just seen Liszt counselling his friend to write, and Wagner announces to him as ready for the printer Dec. 22. Much shorter than the companion work on *Tannhäuser*, its directions to the principal performer are far more minute; his gestures in the opening scene, for instance, being detailed wellnigh bar by bar. Possibly the rôle of Senta might have been treated at equal length, had not the author been preoccupied with the fair-copying of the *Ring;* the *Flying Dutchman* thus commingling alike with the beginning and the end of the tetralogy. Unfortunately Liszt's other desire, for a printed guide to the rendering of *Lohengrin* was never fulfilled, though it came very near to so being.* An analysis of the hero's and heroine's characters from a more objective standpoint than that of the *Communication* would perhaps have reconciled apparent contradictions there. But *Lohengrin* had been "withdrawn for this winter" by its author, and by the time it commences its tour of the German theatres he is a little tired of eternally lecturing to "walls of leather." We therefore will close this chapter with a brief estimate of the results of the spread of *Tannhäuser* in 1852, from the author's point of view.

"Cassel has just asked for the score of Tannhäuser: that, I fancy, completes the list, and I don't count on any further theatres"—writes Wagner to Liszt Feb. 11, '53—"So I now may reckon up my earnings from this glorious undertaking. Very scanty they are, and I may thank God the Ritters continue to stand by me; otherwise, after procuring a few conveniences for house and body (as to which we were much out at elbow), I

* For the embryo of this work see Appendix.

should again have reached bare ground for my existence, and that through the handsome sympathy of noble Germany!" The list was not really ended, merely at a natural halt; but the eight or nine theatres that had already secured the performing rights of *Tannhäuser* had only brought him in the farcical sum of about £100, after deducting incidental expenses and agent's commissions! And it had been a *sale* outright: not a penny more would he receive from them, however often they might give his opera. The only places that could be expected to provide substantial sums, the large Court theatres, stayed shut to him. The fee he had asked of Berlin, a fee Liszt thought by no means excessive, would in itself have covered more than all these paltry doles.—Now we can appreciate the irony of his remark to Uhlig last September, that he was going in quest of the Nibelung's hoard in lieu of the Grail.

And how about the moral and artistic satisfaction? Earlier in the same letter to Liszt we read: "No great joy am I reaping from the German theatres. Everywhere there is a kink, and I must frankly confess to you that I heartily regret my assent to any other performance than those at Weimar. How self-poised, clear and firm I felt 2 years ago, when I let no thought at all arise of further circulation of my works: how piecemeal, wavering, insecure, and exposed to every gust of wind, must I feel now—when I read first this, then that about my works in the papers, but never a plain understanding. I have sunk in my own estimation." That was written at a time of exceptional gloom, but in course of a by no means cheerless letter to F. Heine next June its gist is fully confirmed: "Do you really imagine that I set any store on the present performances in Germany; that I persuade myself they answer at all to my demands? Ah! to be sure, I believed I might do some good by my Guide—but only in the sense that at least *something* of it would stick. Nevertheless I felt quite plainly when I wrote it, that this Guide could only be a *salvage* of my true intentions, that it consequently must be a protest in advance against the bad performances to be expected; and it was that feeling which also prompted the despairing mood in which I became so regardless of friends: it was a veritable cry of anguish, 'that Guide.' Well, well! The thing is taking its own course: all I can say is, I'm glad to see nothing of these performances! If I am kindlier-disposed toward this or that

success, toward this or that conductor, 'tis merely because I believe I see at least goodwill there."

Just so had it been in the first flush of this "spread." With the Breslau success still ringing in his ears, he had written Liszt, Nov. 9: "Even already, no *news* can delight me: were I vain or vainglorious, it might; but, being as I am, no 'written' thing can please me any more.—It all arrives—too late!" Too late in so many a sense. Too late to relieve the embarrassment into which the publication of these very works had plunged him; too late, so pitilessly too late, for him to be able to supervise their rendering in person; too late for a man already full on the road of an absolutely new order of drama. The same "too late" had been uttered yet a little while earlier, on the threshold of the present notoriety, in a letter to Roeckel which looks the situation squarely in the face: "Recently quite a number of German theatres are busied with the production of my Tannhäuser; even the Berlin court-theatre is preparing for it, and I may presume that in a short time every theatre will have given this opera. Unfortunately, this no longer can give me any joy: in every respect it comes—too late for me; moreover, I know that this work will really be nowhere given in the way I wish; in greater or less degree the more sentimental (*weichliche*) side alone will be seized and understood by performers and public, but in nowise the energy of passion that lies in the thing. Whether this unexpected increase of my renown might procure me the possibility of a performance of my Nibelungen dramas some day, I also must very much doubt; since, in my way of looking at it, that possibility would have to spring from quite other relations than those now obtaining between Art and Life. My greatest torture remains—for all apparent successes—to know that I owe the largest share of those successes simply to a misunderstanding of the true substance of my works: on that point I can deceive myself no longer" (Sept. 12, '52).

Written on the eve of proceeding to the versification of *Rheingold*, in the above we have our link with the subject of next chapter.

IX.

ROUNDING THE RING-POEM.

Nerve-troubles attend creation of two masterworks: Ninth Symphony and Ring-poem.—Rheingold *commenced in a fog; interrupted by illness midway; finished early November.*—Rheingold *first conceived in three acts, without Freia.* — *The "Macbeth" among Wagner's dramas; the most perspicuous member of the* Ring; *Loge and Wotan.*—Rheingold *and Hafiz.*—*Holidays at Mariafeld; longing for rural ease.*—*Revision of "the two Siegfrieds": had the* Tod *been revised previous to* 1852?—*Original form of "young"* Siegfried. *Changes now made therein.*—*The "Gloaming of the Gods" eclipses "Siegfried's death"; old blemishes and new beauties.*—*Death of Uhlig leaves Wagner disconsolate.*

And tasks in hours of insight willed
Shall be through hours of gloom fulfilled.
MATTHEW ARNOLD.

DATES have no more than a referential value, but if the reader has even casually noticed those given in the last chapter, he will have observed that the endless correspondence relating to the spread of *Tannhäuser* virtually falls within six months, the second half of 1852. Those six months were also to see the poem of the RING DES NIBELUNGEN rounded. By July the first but one section of the four-part drama stood actually complete, *Die Walküre;* three fourths of the tetralogy, accordingly, had to be either written or revised during this period of immense distraction. And worse than the distraction itself were its effects on the poet's health. Throughout the whole of these six months we hear one constantly repeated cry of "headache," as if the twofold strain upon the mind were wearing out its organ. At no other period does the physical suffering appear to have been at once so acute and so protracted. Is it a condition normally

attendant on the birth of a colossal masterpiece? Certainly we find a parallel case in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.*

For a general idea of Wagner's physical condition during the writing of this poem, we cannot do better than consult a letter despatched to Roeckel on the very eve of versification of *Das Rheingold;* since the letters to the Waldheim prisoner, being much rarer events, have more the character of a chapter in the author's autobiography than those sent to Uhlig and Liszt, which we might rather compare with entries in a diary. "My health is none of the best, and although my body looks fairly robust, my nervous system is in a serious state of increasing exhaustion. Through this everlasting life of phantasy without any corresponding reality, the nerves of my brain are so severely overwrought that I can only work by spurts now, and with long interruptions, if I don't mean to become a complete and chronic wreck."

From the perpetual expression "the nerves of my brain" ("*meine Gehirnnerven*"), coupled with the apparent "robustness of body," I should argue that the malady was nothing deeper-seated than Megrim, alias migraine or "sick-headache"; but anyone who has ever been a victim to that scourge, similar in many of its nervous symptoms to "influenza," will recognise the sheer impossibility of mental application when an attack is in full swing. The various forms of dieting, to which Wagner had subjected himself, would only tend to lower the general tone of the nerves, and thus exacerbate the malady; whereas the last thing a sensible physician would have advised, would have been the climbing of dizzy alps and the forced march across the Italian frontier, which the patient had undertaken on his own account by way of re-

* From April to mid-August 1823, the period in which the Ninth Symphony was actually written, Beethoven was a martyr to (neuralgic?) pain in his eyes, for the only time in his life. Nor was that all. Aug. 16 he gives his nephew a catalogue of his various ailments, which are such that he fears "they will soon cut short the thread of life, or wear it gradually away." A few days afterwards he writes his Archduke Rudolf, from Baden, "I came here on the 13th, very ill, but am better now. I had recently been attacked again with my catarrhal affection; besides that, my bowels in the most wretched condition, and then also the trouble with my eyes: in brief, my organisation was entirely shattered" (see *Die Musik* 1902, pp. 1155-60). Save for the special symptom of the eyes, one might have mistaken it for Wagner writing to Uhlig.

cuperation. And on his holiday to be plagued with business-details, too! The result is, that he returns to Zurich so prostrated that he exclaims to Uhlig a day or two after: "You people mustn't talk Theory any more to me just now; it sends me clean crazy. The nerves of my brain!—there's the mischief. I've terribly assaulted them: it's quite possible I may yet go mad!" (Aug. 9, '52).

And so it goes on, with variations of the same complaint (chiefly addressed to Uhlig), at least until the *Rheingold* poem is completed and the greatest load thus discharged from his mind. At first, in fact, it is impossible even to think of poetry. "I've written Heine to-day. My head is not yet clear enough for working" (Aug. 11). "Unfortunately I'm getting on very slowly [with the *Tannhäuser* Guide], as all manner of work tries my head uncommonly just now" (Aug. 14). "If my head were but better! With that cursed brochure, which I rushed at last so as to polish everything off, I ruined myself again. Often it's like a sharp knife cutting into the nerves of my brain. Moreover I'm feverishly tired in all my limbs; but if only my head will recover, they also will rapidly improve; on it—that laboratory of the imagination—depends everything. . . . Forgive me my many commissions: but if you don't do a double turn for me now, 'twill be all up with me.—Think of it! even this letter almost knocks me down" (Aug. 30). There cause and effect are plain as can be: the spread of *Tannhäuser*, with all the correspondence involved, has told severely on an excitable system, and the "nerves of his brain"—scientifically speaking, the region round about the optic thalami—must pay the penalty. That "sharp knife" cutting, the "feverish tiredness in the limbs," and the sense of impending evil, are the very symptoms of Megrim; the attacks of which, especially if brought on by mental labour, may sometimes be prolonged for several days by successive relapses.

Sept. 5, "Only two lines: I *mustn't* write, because I can't; that's how things stand with me"; and after barely a dozen lines, "I can write no more. Goodbye." Three days later an equally short letter, so unusual in this correspondence, ends with "That's all I'm able to squeeze out to-day. Don't take it amiss!" (Sept. 8). On the same date that notable letter to Liszt about Raff, Berlioz and *new* creations (p. 360 *ant.*), begins and ends as follows: "Unluckily I can't reply to you as I should wish.

The nerves of my brain are so racked again, that I have had to give up all writing and reading for a while—I might almost say, all mental existence. Every letter—even the briefest—knocks me terribly up, and nothing save the greatest quiet (where and when?) can—or rather, could—put me really right. . . . I can write no more now! Don't be cross with me! My head is nigh bursting!—I'll just hurriedly add the warmest farewell I have in my heart." Another three days later, "My head is still bad, and all my nerves upset, in consequence of this eternal friction with an invisible land outside. . . . Farewell, I must stretch myself full-length on the divan, to close my eyes" (to U. Sept. 11).* Next day we have the letter to Roeckel cited a page or two back. A week after that: "I am growing accustomed to the ruin of my nerves; one can always do a little something with them still. . . . To-day is the federal fast-day, and for the last week the *Föhn* has been enough to make one wish one's nerves at the Devil." The Föhn is a moisture-laden south wind peculiar to the valleys and lakes of Switzerland, but similar in its general effects to the sirocco so prevalent at Venice etc. Its humidity would really seem to have eased the writer, however, much as a vapour-bath might; for, not only does he indulge once more in a good streak of his pristine humour in this letter of Sept. 19 to Uhlig, but also has important news for us: "My condition isn't a hair's breadth better yet; only I'm gradually accustoming myself to a fresh degradation of my health; I'm accommodating myself to it, and even work *a little hour* a day now!"

You scarcely need ask what that "work" was. The letter of Sept. 12 to Roeckel had spoken of the trilogy plan: "The whole will be called 'Der Reif des Nibelungen'†—the pro-

* Under the heading "Megrim (*Migraine. Hemicrania. Sick-headache*)" a standard English medical authority remarks: "During the paroxysms nothing is so efficacious as complete rest in the recumbent posture, in a perfectly quiet and darkened room." The further statement that this malady "generally subsides with advance of years. Patients do not often suffer from it after fifty," bears out my diagnosis, since we do not hear of these sick-headaches when Wagner has passed that age.—W. A. E.

† Note this as the tentative title. *Reif* and *Ring* mean the same; but at least the non-German will be thankful that the latter homonym was ultimately adopted, and there can hardly be a question as to which of the two makes the better euphony.

ogue 'Der Raub des Rheingoldes' [and so on]. The 3 dramas re finished, and of the prologue I have merely the verses to arry out. At the end of this year I think of laying the poem efore my friends, in print. With my present state of health, the xecution of the whole will naturally cost much time: the date of erformance I must set at present in the fabulous age of 'the Future.'" So the RHEINGOLD poem was seriously begun at last n the week between Sunday Sept. 12 and Sunday Sept. 19, 852*—the week of the *Föhn*. That Föhn we shall find immortalised at the end of the second scene, where a "dun-coloured nist fills the stage" and ages the Gods, after Freia has been carried off by the Giants.

Progress with the poem was by no means break-neck at first: 'a little hour a day." Nor even every day; for a fortnight later he intimation to Liszt runs, "My nerves are still none of the est; yet I have begun to work a short hour a day at my poem gain, off and on. There'll be no peace for me till I know it is inished, which I hope will be ere long" (Oct. 3). The presence f Belloni and Vieuxtemps would scarcely expedite matters, and Oct. 5 we read (to U.), "I shall tell you nothing about my work; t's going slowly, but well!" Unhappily the next sentence is ominous: "Fare well and healthier than me. I shall shortly go crazy!"—a repetition of the fear expressed two months ago. Before a week is out, the poem has to be laid aside: "That I am able to write you at all to-day, is simply due to my decision to make a forced pause in my poetic work, not to fall once more into that fatal condition the most painful effects of which I have only just outrun a little. Letter-writing, however, I now am convinced once for all, severely taxes me, and you therefore may flatter yourself if I manage even to fill this sheet of paper. If the weather were not so inveterately bad, I should have started to-day on a couple of days' excursion. Already I had mapped out a tour to Glarus and Schwyz. Unfortunately, with this eternal grey dampness of the atmosphere, I shall have to abjure any pleasure-trip: simply my afternoon walk I keep up, mostly

* Personally I like to imagine the versification of its first scene as at least started at Lugano, and there is nothing as yet to disprove my fancy; for, contrary to the definite record of the exact day of beginning and ending *Young Siegfried* and the *Walküre*, the *Rheingold* poem seems to grow out of the mist as impalpably as does its introductory music.—W. A. E.

3 to 4 hours, however hard it rains, albeit with a hang-dog sort of pleasure" (Oct. 11). The "sheet" gets filled to overflowing, nevertheless, and lower down this letter we learn that "warm baths of 86° for half an hour in the evening just before going to bed" have helped him much. "Without that bath I should have been a lost man by now; it quiets my nerves, and gives me good sleep every time. Lindemann has even advised me to take a similar bath for half an hour in the morning, if I want to get rapidly well; for the present I only take a short one, in water chilled to 77°. My head I repeatedly douche with colder water during each bath." It is while thus 'comparing notes' with a brother invalid, poor Uhlig, that Wagner receives the elating news of the Breslau success of *Tannhäuser*.

By no means is he out of the wood, with his nerves, for he has to send apologies through Uhlig to another correspondent, next day, for not answering at once: "That sort of letter always takes a deal out of me." Not a word about the poem; nor in that to Liszt on the morrow (Oct. 13): "Nothing further to-day. Used up as I am, it would only be lame. . . . Your old tormenter, Richard Wagner." On the 14th, just three days after the "forced pause" has been made in his poem, the migraine seems to have renewed its attack: "I wanted to work, but felt so ill that I had to pass the whole forenoon on the divan, half asleep, half awake. There'll have to be an alteration in me." *This* letter to Uhlig, however, tells us exactly how far *Rheingold* had progressed already, namely to the descent into Nibelheim: "My chief anxiety is about the Nibelungen-poem: 'tis the only thing that always uplifts me so soon as ever I touch it. I'm averse to the thought of posterity, yet now and then that idle dream comes over me when my poem steps out of my soul into the world. It is and holds all that I can and have: to be able still to work it out, and bring it out!!! The titles I have now determined: 'Der Ring des Nibelungen,' a Bühnenfestspiel [stage-festival-play] to be performed in three days and a fore-evening.—Fore-evening:—*das Rheingold*.* First day:—*die Walküre*. Second day:—*der junge Siegfried*.—Third day:—*Siegfrieds Tod*.—The fore-evening is in

* In the announcement to Liszt of Nov. 9 the definite articles are all given capital "d"s; otherwise the titles are the same, i.e. the final ones until the first *public* edition, of 1863.

eality a complete drama, fairly rich in action: fully half of it is inished now; the Walküre entirely. The two Siegfrieds, how-ver, must yet be heavily revised, more especially *Siegfrieds Tod.* —But then—*'twill be something!!*—That I have been unable to vork to-day, has terribly depressed me! How I should have iked a couple of days' outing—but the weather is too vile—egular 2nd December!"

So *Rheingold* is half-finished, apparently by October 10. That alf has taken something like four weeks to versify, or as long as he whole of *die Walküre* last June, owing to its author's wretched ealth compelling him to work in snippets. And it must have een followed by another acute relapse, since not a line stands vritten to any of his correspondents between the 14th of October nd the end of that month. Nov. 1 we again hear of the poem t last, in terms that suggest its having been resumed about a veek previously: "You'll get but half-a-dozen lines to-day, dear riend [U.]. After some interruption (through being unwell) I ave arrived at devoting all my power of application exclusively o the completion of 'Rheingold,' and shall not stop myself to vrite long letters before I'm through with it. That, however, vill be during the course of this week, at the end of which I herefore promise you a *proper* letter." November 1852 began vith a Monday: by the 3rd or 4th, then, DAS RHEINGOLD was inished as to its verses; for Uhlig is told on the 10th, "The niddle of last week I completed my work, very much exhausted." Scarcely more than ten days can this second half of *Rheingold* ave taken him, so that he must have doubled his "little hour" of late. As a matter of fact, the next letter to Uhlig will satisfy our minutest curiosity even on that point: "The postman comes t 11 every morning; I usually work from 9 o'clock until that our, and therefore am already somewhat tired and in need of est when my letters arrive. This places me in the alternative of ither not answering at all, or doing it as briefly as possible; if I ut it off, it's precisely the same next day, unless I stop my work ntirely for one morning, as happens when I mean to write a ongish letter. From noon till bedtime I never write another ine, except in the most pressing emergency."

When the poems of *Young Siegfried* and the *Walküre* were inished, we found their author giving vent to the utmost joy: here is nothing of the kind to celebrate the consummation of

the *Rheingold* poem. Partly due to the fateful lesson of the work itself, the greater share of this lack of elation must be assigned to the same cause that had impeded the poem's progress: excessive nerve-fatigue. The letter that announces the event to Uhlig—and a very long letter it is, as a rest is being taken—for the most part consists of reflections on death and diet: "Let us be reasonable, dear friend, and recognise in utmost calm that everyone of us bears within himself the genetic seeds of his own death, and that the only question is how to stave off that specific death as long as possible. With *myself*, e.g., everything tends to a death through nerve-consumption. . . . So long as I still have an object in life, I wish to keep death from my throat, and for that reason adopt all feasible expedients to preserve myself. I purposely avoid all over-exertion, step out of the way of all over-excitement, as much as possible, try to regulate my feeding and digestion, and aim above all at the utmost comfort, repose, agreeable impressions—so far as I can. I'm assured by many that I still may jog along awhile if I strictly observe this diet, and analogies are making it credible even to myself. . . . Simple food-stuffs are not for such as you and me: we need the complex, substances that offer the utmost nourishment with the smallest demand on the power of digestion. Our rule should be to eat *often*, *little* and *good*, at the same time to avoid all great exertion, even in bodily movement, but be careful for comfort and agreeable rest." It is the valetudinarian's gospel; but, when the invalid happens to have such an "object in life" before him as the composition of a *Ring des Nibelungen*, it becomes his absolute duty to take care of himself for sake of the world.

The announcement of the previous day to Liszt (Nov. 9) is more plainly despondent in tone, shadowed as it is by the failure of the Berlin scheme for *Tannhäuser*, the history of which precedes it in this letter. "With myself things are going from bad to worse each day; 'tis an *indescribably good-for-nothing* life I'm living! Of actual enjoyment of life I know absolutely nothing; to me the 'pleasure of life, of *love*' is purely a matter of imagination, not of experience. So my heart has had to pass into my brain, and my life to become a mere artificial one: only as 'artist' can I still live; into the artist has my whole 'man' been resolved. . . . You who are prince and world and all in

all to me—have pity on me!—Nay, softly! softly!" The moan of the caged lion is stifled in a highly symptomatic manner; the *Faust*-overture is taken up for discussion: "Very rightly did you feel out the lack in it: it lacks—the Woman! Perhaps you would understand my tone-poem at once if I called it 'Faust in solitude'! . . . If I publish it, I'll call it 'Faust in solitude,' or 'The lonely Faust—a tone-poem for orchestra.'" So aptly does the title fit his own situation, that he launches at once into: "Last week I finished my new poems for the Siegfrieds, though the two older ones must yet be revised, as considerable alterations have now become necessary in them. I shall not have quite finished before the end of the year [Here follow the titles as given to U. mid-Oct.]. What fate may befall this poem, the fable of my life and all I am and feel, I cannot determine as yet. Thus much is certain, however—if Germany does not open to me very soon, if I have to continue without stimulus to my artistic existence, my animal instinct of life will drive me to *give up all art*. On what I can then eke out my being, I know not: but the music for the Nibelungen I shall not write, and none but a monster could expect me to remain any longer the slave of my art! Ah! I keep falling back to the lugubrious keynote of this letter! . . . Deal gently with me!—Mayhap you'll soon be rid of me!!"

That is the history of the frame of mind in which the poem of *Das Rheingold* was begun and ended: let us now take a glance at the work itself.

The first adumbration of the tetralogy (to U., Oct. 51) spoke of "three dramas, with a three-act prologue." That, of course, was long before even the preliminary draft of RHEINGOLD had been thought out.

How this particular work could have been arranged so as to fall into *three* acts, it is difficult to imagine—unless its second scene, the earliest appearance of Wotan and the Giants, were omitted. In all probability, and more than probability, that is precisely how the work at first presented itself to its author's mind. The first scene, that at the bottom of the Rhine, not only is prefigured in the "Nibelungen-Myth" of 1848, but is fully mapped out as to every material incident in the letter to Liszt of November 51. The second scene, on the other hand, is

represented in the said 'argument' of 1848 by nothing save the following lines: "Wotan bargains with the giants to build the gods a burg, from whose security to rule the world in order; their building finished, the giants ask the Nibelungen-hoard as pay" (*P.* VII. 301). Here the goddess of eternal Youth is only mentioned once, and that in connection with the Wälsungen: "a barren wedlock in this race is fertilised by Wotan through one of Holda's apples, which he leads the wedded pair to eat" (*ibid.* 303). Without the "apples" we should scarcely be able to identify this Holda at all with the Freia of *Das Rheingold;* and it will be observed that those apples are used, as in the Book of Genesis, for the emblem of fecundity, not of perpetual youth.—The next stage in the development of Wagner's idea of this goddess shews her under yet another name, with her later attributes indeed, but her later appellative transferred to the present "Fricka." This we find in the dramatic sketch for *Wieland der Schmiedt* (early 1850), where Wayland thus accounts for his possession of the magic gold: "Thou knowest that Iduna once was robbed from the gods, she who gave them youth unending so long as she abode among them. Then aged grew the gods, their beauty vanished, and from Freia's side fared Odur [Odin?], whom her charm no longer bound. Iduna was recovered to the gods; with her came youth and beauty back to them, but Odur turned not back to Freia. Upon those crags now sits the sorrowing goddess, and ofttimes weeps warm tears of gold for her lost spouse; those fallen tears I win from out the river, and weld from them full many a winsome work to gladden men" (*P.* I. 225). We need not trouble our heads with the legendary authority for this account, but should notice that it in no way connects the goddess of Youth with the building of the Burg; she has been "robbed" from the gods. In fact, the use of this legend for a narrative in *Wieland* rather excludes it from the 'sphere of influence' of the Nibelungen-Myth.—Most significant of all, however, is that gap in the summary given to Uhlig last November, when Wagner announced to him the general scheme of the tetralogy (252 *ant.*). Here Alberich's theft of the gold is separated from his own capture and despoilment by nothing save a parenthetic explanation, that the power residing in this Rhine-gold is "only to be won by him who renounces love." The parenthesis, quâ parenthesis, itself

has interest as a foretaste of more positive interruption; but the fact remains that, barely four weeks after the reference to a "three-act prologue," the summary, brief as it is, stands complete in every other particular save that of Freia's ransom, with its correlatives Loge and Erda.—The extremely important scene in *Rheingold*, therefore, where Freia is claimed by the Giants as their appointed pay, must be classed with that "wealth of new material" which had come to Wagner in the early part of 1852, Professor Ettmüller having in all likelihood directed his attention to the myth of Swadilfari.* Without Freia, however, this second scene would lose all its object, and we accordingly may take it that the form in which Wagner originally conceived the prologue to his trilogy was as follows: act i, beneath the waters of the Rhine; act ii, in Nibelheim (perhaps including the great scene of Alberich's curse); act iii, on the hills with Walhall in the distance.

Now, so soon as the scenes grew from three into four (or virtually five), a division into acts would be against the author's sense of balance. So the work must be continuous: for which he would find a precedent in some of Beethoven's symphonies, whilst he himself had once entertained the idea for his *Flying Dutchman*—thus connected once again with *Rheingold*. Even so the awkward number 4 remains, at first sight. Yet, if one examines the work a little more attentively, one will find that it resolves itself into three scenes and a prologue, thus answering to *Götterdämmerung* itself, with its three acts and a prologue: the

* Which Miss Weston relates as follows: "After the gods had built Midgard and Walhalla (which, according to mythology, they built themselves) a certain master-builder came to them, and offered to build them a Burg which should serve as defence against the giants, asking as reward the goddess Freyja, and the sun and moon. The gods held counsel together, and at Loke's advice promised to give him what he asked, provided that the Burg was built within the winter months, and that no man should aid him," and so on (*Legends of the Wagner Drama* p. 65). Swadilfari is this "builder's" horse, that bears huge blocks to the building till Loke decoys it by himself taking the form of a mare. Apart from the bargaining away of Freia, an echo from this myth is audible in Loge's "Denn Mond und Stern' und die strahlende Sonne . . . dienen müssen sie dir" (addressed to Alberich, *Rheingold* sc. 3); but Wagner, as usual, has quite remodelled it to fit a larger scheme.—Miss Weston further informs us that "the goddess Freyja appears occasionally as Odin's wife, therefore identical with Fricka or Frigg" (*ibid.* 85), thus confirming that passage in *Wieland*.

"prologue" to the "trilogy," in fact, is given a prologue of its own. Scenes 2, 3 and 4, are strictly and absolutely continuous in time and action, compassed between the "morning and evening" of one day, as Wotan explicitly says at the close. The first scene, on the other hand, is separated from the others by an undefined period of time. And there we see the perversity of theatrical managers, when they cut *Das Rheingold* into two approximately equal halves—the ugliest possible division—by a pause for refreshments after the second scene. If pause there must be at the ordinary theatre, for heaven's sake let it be rational, and drop the curtain at the psychological moment when Alberich has borne away the waters' light; then call another halt at the end of the scene in Nibelheim, and your pauses would correspond to what I have inferred to be the author's earliest intention. But, to say nothing of 'piety,' the author's riper plan should be adhered-to for the simple reason that he meant this play to be an actual *prologue*, i.e. to have a form distinguishable from that of the dramas which succeed it; and it may almost be said to be the essence of a prologue that it shall be continuous. Continuity is so much the guiding principle of the work, that Wagner has admitted no ordinary scene-shifting, but invented solely for this purpose his moving panoramas and his veils of steam.

That brings us to the workmanship. Many and great as are the acknowledged beauties in its music, there can be no question that *Das Rheingold* is the least popular of the four sections of the *Ring*, and, unlike its fellows, is scarcely ever given purely for its own sake, i.e. alone. This has often been attributed to a lack of interest in "doings of mythical gods and goddesses": far from that, I should rather seek the reason in the general dislike of any story that so ruthlessly displays the seamy side of human nature. This is the *Macbeth* among Wagner's dramas: in no other of them have we so many misdeeds set forth; in no other, so little to rouse our gentler sympathies. But the tale *had* to be told, and the manner of its telling is consummate. Who, after carefully studying this poem, would dream that it was written at a time of intense neurasthenia? Not one trace of morbidness or mawkishness will you discover in it, not one evidence of distraction by an aching head. Something over a year hence—immediately after the completion of the *Rheingold*

music, as it happens—Wagner writes to Roeckel: "I have made some noteworthy experiences with regard to my works. If I take account of the wretched state now normal to me, I cannot but deem my nerves ruined: strange to say, however, these nerves do me the most wonderful service when put to it—when sufficiently fine incentives come to me; then I have a clearness of vision, a sense of pleasure in perceiving and creating, such as I never knew before. Ought I to call my nerves ruined, then? I cannot. Only, I see that—in the way my nature has developed—its normal state is exaltation, whereas the ordinary calm is abnormal to it. As a fact, I only feel well when I'm 'beside myself': then I'm quite in my right senses" (Jan. 54). It is almost as much an enigma to himself, as to the outsider, this state of inspiration: for that is the sole convenient term for it. With Beethoven, his friends called it "raptus." The only difference with Wagner, was that he cut short its duration at will, and could command its coming and its going, provided he were not totally prostrated, much as the Iron Duke could regulate his sleep. With the world shut off from him, if only by a curtain, for an hour or two his "inspiration" makes another man of him, as if some hidden power had seized his pen. Compare the prose-writings with the poems of the same period. Full as they are of flashes of illumination, in the prose-works there is mostly a lack of coherence, of clearness and unmistakableness of expression, in the very parts where a man of "ordinary calm" would have been at his best. In the dramas, on the contrary, there is a perspicuity, not only of general structure, but also of expression, that makes one marvel how so much could be conveyed in so few words; and it is the rarest thing to find the 'logic' of these poems fail—the exceptions, to be dealt with hereafter, will literally prove the rule.

For compactness and absolute coherence *Das Rheingold* bears away the palm from all the other members of the *Ring*. It would be impossible to tell the story more clearly, very difficult to tell it at less length. Here, too, the diction has advanced a stage beyond even that of *Die Walküre*. Take Wotan, Alberich, Mime and Loge, in the third scene, and you will find that each is endowed with a mode of speech conforming to his character. The dignity of the ruler of the gods is expressed in his first greeting to the ruler of the dwarves, "Von Nibelheim's nächt'gem

Land vernahmen wir neue Mähr': mächt'ge Wunder wirke hier Alberich" (so splendidly matched by its music); his scornfulness, in the immediately succeeding lines, "daran uns zu weiden trieb uns Gäste die Gier"; his baser love of bullying, in the "hörst du, Alp?" when Alberich lies bound at his mercy. Alberich himself has a peculiarly rasping tongue, almost throughout, as witness the burrs that constitute his magic formulæ, "Nacht und Nebel, Niemand gleich!" and "Krumm und grau krieche Kröte!" —yet Alberich in his own domain is the counterpart of Wotan, and can rise to the height of a situation, as in those magnificent lines, "Frevelte ich, so frevelt' ich frei an mir" etc., and the end of his curse, "So—segnet in höchster Noth der Nibelung seinen Hort."* Mime's whining nature comes out in many a word that necessitates pronunciation through the nose, as "da müssen wir spähen, spüren und graben." Loge expresses himself for the most part in dactyls and anapæsts: tripping, as "Dass die engste Klinze dich fasse"; insinuating, "wie wahrtest du Weiser dich dann?" or crackling like his own element, "zur leckenden Lohe." And Loge, the quickness of whose eye and wit tempts one to call him the artist among these deities, has lines of supreme beauty to declaim: beside the famous "So weit Leben und Weben" etc., take as an instance his "Ein Tand ist's in des Wassers Tiefe, lachenden Kindern zur Lust." But to do justice to the mere diction of *Das Rheingold* would need an essay to itself; so we will dismiss it with that puissant parallel where Alberich's "Der Traurigen traurigster Knecht" prophetically poises Wotan's "der Mächtigen mächtigsten Herrn."

Concise and pregnant as is the diction, equally close-knit is the story of this Prologue. "Fairly rich in action," we have just heard it denoted by its author himself, and in effect it is positively packed with events; yet not a single one is episodic, all are germane to the inner plot. For sheer stagecraft it is a masterpiece—with one small reservation. In *Young Siegfried* and in the *Walküre* (save for that drastic scene *with chorus* of the Valkyries) the stage is kept clear of any but protagonists: in *Rheingold* it was incumbent to introduce a few subsidiary characters, to give a picture of Wotan's home-surroundings, so

* "Hort" is alterd to "Ring" in the score; that certainly is more in keeping with the plot, but less majestic in sound.

to speak; and in any case it would be difficult to provide two of them, namely Froh and Donner, with something to *do*. That difficulty is for the most part overcome with great skill; but there are situations where the inexorable presence of these subsidiaries has to be mitigated by mere dumb gesture: "the gods all look inquiringly toward Wotan," or something similar, is a constantly recurring stage-direction. Now, while privately reading to oneself the poem, the embarrassment of pauses thus to be filled out does not obtrude itself upon one's mind, since one involuntarily either blots the minor characters from one's mental vision, or draws its field so *close* that one may trace the slightest change of facial play. Upon an actual stage, and in a theatre, large enough for the representation of so gigantic a work, however, these finer shades are inevitably lost to view; consequently I have never been able to repress the heretical wish that Wagner had been less rigorous in the application of his tenets here, or rather, that he had not been even *more* rigorous than the rule laid down in *Opera and Drama* (p. 131 *ant.*). In my humble opinion, there was not only a legitimate opportunity, but almost an artistic necessity at certain moments of general tension, to let Froh, Freia, Donner, Fricka, eh! and the two big basso Giants, give vent to their feelings in just a few concerted bars: the Rhine-daughters in fact had done so, and do so again at the end of the play; whilst Wotan and Loge themselves have three bars to sing concurrently in scene 3, and Fricka has one (if not two) to sing at like time with Freia in scene 4. It would immensely have relieved the rigidity of parts of the second and fourth scenes, where grouping and pose cannot lightly be varied. Had their music been written in the period of the *Meistersinger* and *Götterdämmerung*, I feel morally convinced that the expedient would not have been despised.

In a fault-finding vein, there is another point that militates against more general appreciation of *Das Rheingold;* a point of stage-management so simple, that one wonders why it has nowhere received due attention. When shall we see the paying-over of the Hoard transacted as if it really were a mighty store of precious, i.e. *heavy* metal? Even though Wagner himself in 1876, with the pressure of a thousand other details, may have tolerated the stringing of chains between the giants' staffs, and the hanging thereto of salvers etc. that clink like tin as they strike

each other, it cannot have been the picture in his mind some twenty years before! Remember the massiveness of the orchestral delineation of that Hoard as it rose like a portent from the bowels of the earth to light of day. Give us vessels of the most archaic shape, and thick as primitive pottery, and give us them with no stinting hand. Never mind Alberich's "kärglich Häufchen": it was only his purse-proud affectation of contempt for his present possessions, compared with what he purposed to amass. But above all, let Loge and Froh make us realise that it is ponderous, this Hoard, that all that load of gold will not outweigh the "worth of woman," without the Ring be added. And let them pile it, literally *pile* it, till it takes on something crudely resembling the stature of Freia with her bunched-out robes. Then one of the most critical incidents in the whole tetralogy will be converted from a transparent make-believe into a serious and enthralling situation, and another step will have been taken on that road so splendidly pursued at Bayreuth—a road whose goal is recognition of *Rheingold's* rightful dramatic rank.

What a drama it is! Here Wagner has gone to the utmost limit possible with a poem to be wedded to music. Packed though it is with outward action, the intellect is given more matter for reflection in this "prologue" than in any of the three "dramas" proper. You may read its poem twenty times, and still make some fresh discovery. The reason? It is *Loge's* drama. He it is, whose subtlety has set these dwarves and gods and giants by the ears: Loge the despised, the poor relation—how he plays upon the vanity, the pride and the cupidity, of these lords of creation with whom he is "almost ashamed" to associate! How archly he plays off the Rhine-daughters' pleading as his pretext for Wotan's robbing of the ring; the Rhine-daughters against whom Fricka cherishes a woman's grudge. And the irony of his parting words, yelled down to the cheated nixies, "Let the gods' brand-new glory be your sunshine henceforth!" Loge well knows the end on which the gods are blindly rushing; have you ever noticed how he has paved their path of ruin from the first? The fire that burns Walhall to ashes at the end of *Götterdämmerung*, that fire has breathed through all its galleries or ever the ransom was paid: no sooner had the giants set its copestone, than Loge, unbidden, made his private survey, laid his mine. And it was Loge who had clinched the bargain in the first

place, that bargain dooming Wotan and his fellows ere the ring had but entered his dreams.

Wotan is not saved by his rejection of the ring, since the ring is but another emblem of the *everlasting* power he aims at in this drama—"Ewige Macht . . . das ewige Werk"—thus running counter to his own nature's love of change, "Wandel und Wechsel liebt wer lebt." There is the rock on which he must split. From the moment he carved the "runes of bargain" on his spear,* to bind the other world-powers, he had abandoned his freedom: "What thou art, thou art *but* by compacts," says Fasolt to him. Thus Wotan is the direct antithesis of Siegfried—intentionally so; and when we see this god descending to brute force to wrest the ring from Alberich, the shock is even greater than that we experience at Siegfried's wresting it from a defenceless woman. So soon as Wotan gives up the sovereignty of mind and beauty ("Die ihr durch Schönheit herrscht") for that of muscle, his doom is sealed. Nevertheless I cannot help feeling that too much stress has been laid on the element of "fear" in Wotan's character, toward the end of the poem, where we seem to have a *straining* at contrast with the future hero, the "youth who knew it not." Fear, of a kind, must form an ingredient in the noblest nature, be it but the fear of sinning against itself; but cowardice might easily be read into this emphasising of the idea, though Wotan disdainfully disowns that by his reproaches to Brünnhilde in act iii of *Die Walküre* ("doch feig und dumm dachtest du mich, zu gering wärst du meinem Grimm"), and he dares still more than his grandson, for he dares with open eyes.

It neither is nor is meant to be an exemplary character, that of Wotan in *Das Rheingold;* yet the very power with which it is drawn excites our fellow-feeling. As Wagner says of him in that Rheingold-letter to Roeckel (Jan. 54): "Take a good look at him, he resembles *ourselves* to a hair, he is the sum of the intelligence

* Meinck says: "It is a new idea of Wagner's," i.e. a departure from the mythic sources, "that Wotan has carved runes on his spear as symbols of compacts with the individual world-powers; if Wotan breaks his bargain, his spear must lose its sway." In the original poem, in fact, though the spear is the symbol of Wotan's pledged word, the runes have not been actually carved upon it: the lines "Die dein Speer birgt, sind sie dir Spiel, des berath'nen Bundes Runen?" did not exist in the 1853 edition; they must have been added during the composition of the music.

of the Present; whereas Siegfried is the man we hope for in the future." Here the "Hellenic-optimistic" spirit has worked to the front again; but, however little we might desire to live in a Future wherein Siegfried should be the "perfect" type of human being (a Nietzschian "over-man"), his creator's definition of Wotan as the representative of an imperfect Present is absolutely true. We all feel something of the *Rheingold* Wotan in us, though few can climb the height of his renunciation in the later dramas. For this reason we should note a softening touch afforded to his character when the work was set to music, though it does not appear in the ordinary textbooks etc. It is but an alteration of three letters, the replacing of an "uns" by "mir" when Wotan has decided to give the ring as ransom: "Zu mir, Freia, du bist befreit: wieder gekauft kehr' uns die Jugend zurück!" That "mir"—"to *me!*"—at the beginning of the exclamation, goes far to redeem the heartlessness with which he had bargained away his better feelings, and prepares us for the affecting scene at the close of *Die Walküre*, in the same way as his "Tief in der Brust brennt mir die Schmach" and "Mit bösem Zoll zahlt' ich den Bau" give promise of a nobler conscience.

One further aspect of this Prologue. The writing of its first half precisely synchronises with its author's encomiums of Hafiz. Sept. 12, 1852, as we have seen, he was on the eve of versifying *Das Rheingold;* upon that day he sings the praises of the Persian poet to *two* of his friends, in a strain than which no stronger can be conceived. To Uhlig: "Now listen! listen! listen! Procure yourself Hafis (*Hafis* Gedichte, Sammlung von Daumer). I. At Campe's in Hamburg. II. Recently issued in Nuremberg. This Persian Hafis is the *greatest* poet that ever lived and sang.—If you don't get him this instant, I shall despise you from top to toe: put down the cost to my Tannhäuser account. Only be thankful for the recommendation!" To Roeckel: "Feuerbach's writings would afford you uncommonly stimulant reading. I should also like to make you acquainted with the poet whom I have lately recognised as the greatest of them all: the Persian 'Hafis,' of whose poems there now exists a very readable translation by Daumer. Acquaintance with this poet has filled me with a veritable awe: for all our vaunted European culture, we

stand almost abashed before what the Orient had once produced already with such sure, serenely lofty calm of mind. Presumably you would share my amazement. The whole result of modern European evolution I can only call a *universal* disintegration, whereas I might term the apparition of that Oriental the dawn of individuality before its age"—literally, "a premature individual trait" (*einen vorzeitigen individuellen Zug*). That is the nearest approach to an explicit criticism of Hafiz we shall get from Wagner; so we must bear in mind not only its coupling with a recommendation of Feuerbach, but its being addressed to a brother "revolutionary," the rationalistic Roeckel.

The next allusion occurs a week later, in that letter of Sept. 19 which informs Uhlig of the commencement of work at *Rheingold:* "You must get Hafis and Rausse bound together, the *fire* and the *water* prophets: there'll be a fine hissing"; for which we find a parallel in Wellgunde's "Ein Schwefelbrand in der Wogen Schwall: vor Zorn der Liebe zischt er laut," and a parallel of some interest. Then another week later, Sept. 27, "If I could only attain to an agreeable repose! Yesterday a young lady told me *what* would heal me: she was very bold, but right! What an idiot I am, on the whole, to be so fastidious a beast!! But that's how I'm built!—Farewell, Siegmund father of Siegfried [the name of Uhlig's latest-born]. Study Hafis; that's my advice to you." Of course the first part of this quotation may have nothing to do with the last part; but the advice of the lady cannot be left out of the reckoning if we wish to arrive at Wagner's interpretation of that eternal riddle, Hafiz, particularly when we recall that other (?) lady's definition of the *Tannhäuser*-overture as a "sermon against the sin of hyprocrisy."

Then we have the most important reference of them all, for it quite definitely connects Hafiz with *Das Rheingold*, the first half of which poem had been completed but three days previously: "We have been to see the Kummers at Tiefenau, near Elgg; the accommodation there is horrible—God preserve me from such a water-establishment: I'd rather burn away in fire—preferably in that of Hafis.—Study Hafis properly: he is the greatest and most sublime philosopher. No one else has yet gone to the *root of the matter* so surely and incontestably as he. There is only one thing—what he lauds; and all the rest is worth not a farthing, however high and lofty it may dub itself.—Something similar will

also become clear in my Nibelungen.—Farewell, and be wicked enough to take things easy!"*

That is the last enthusiastic reference to Hafiz in any of Wagner's published letters; and, save for the answer to a request of Roeckel's next summer, this Persian poet appears to have dropped out of Wagner's train of thought as rapidly as he entered it. His effective reign had lasted for about six weeks; no more. The correspondence with Uhlig does not terminate for over two months yet; so that we might have expected the four laudations within as many weeks to be followed by at least an allusion, had Hafiz continued to be held in such extravagant esteem. To Liszt, on the other hand, with whom correspondence is vigorously maintained for years to come, the name of Hafiz is not so much as breathed. We can only conclude, then, that this "greatest poet of them all" figured merely as a comet in Wagner's firmament. But—he was connected with the first half of *Rheingold;* and in that connection we may recognise the side to which Wagner would have inclined, had he been alive to the dispute that so long has raged around the purport of this poet's works.† In each of the scenes of the first half of *Rheingold* the moral is that "Love," the love of man and woman, is the highest blessing in the world: in the first scene, "Denn was nur lebt will lieben, meiden will keiner die Minne"; in the second, "In der Welten Ring nichts ist so reich als Ersatz zu muthen dem Mann für Weibes Wonne und Werth." There can be little doubt, then,

* It should be explained that poor Uhlig was literally slaving himself to death in the Dresden band; but there is a connection even here with Hafiz, whose Ghazal 58 says "Take matters upon thyself lightly, for it is the way of the world to lay burthens on him who is ready to do hard work" (J. H. M'Carthy's translation).—By the way, it would be necessary to consult *Daumer's* translation (2 vols. 1846-51), to ascertain how much of the true Hafiz had really come under Wagner's eyes. As to Daumer himself, he was an opponent of Feuerbach, and had declared himself in favour of a "Religion of Love and Peace," embodied in his *Religion des neuen Weltalters* (3 vols. Hamburg 1850).—Wagner's own brother-in-law, Prof. Hermann Brockhaus, is responsible for the standard critical edition of Hafiz in the original language (3 vols. Leipzig 1854-61).

† For an extremely luminous account of the controversy etc., see an article on "Hafiz" by Mr Charles Dowdeswell in *The Meister* for 1895, to which I must acknowledge my own indebtedness for a general estimate of the Persian poet's trend.—W. A. E.

hat it was in *this* light, i.e. as the poet of "laughing" love (cf. *Siegfried*, close), and not as a mystic, that Wagner regarded Hafiz n the autumn of 1852.

There still remains one reference to Hafiz, a reference so obered down as to confirm my opinion that the reign of the Persian as "the *greatest* poet, the most sublime philosopher," n the eyes of his recent admirer, was of very brief duration. n September 52 Wagner had recommended Feuerbach and Hafiz to Roeckel's perusal; letter-writing appears to have been ermitted to the prisoners at Waldheim only at long intervals, o that Wagner does not receive a reply until somewhere about May 53. After a little delay, he forwards through Roeckel's vife a copy of his *Communication*, remarking in his letter of une 8 to the prisoner himself: "I am adding to it what you vanted besides: 1. '*Hafis*' (two volumes). 2. *Feuerbach* 'Lectures on the Essence of Religion.'—To my great delight, your rame of mind seems to be such that I may promise you refreshment from these books: I may hope you are well, and have preserved that spirit which feels itself invigorated by the beautiful even when compelled itself to resignation. In that espect, perhaps, you are no worse off than every other man o-day: the really beautiful must still remain to us a vision of he brain, no more. That it can exist, will exist, and shall be njoyed by human beings like to us in every sensation—the certainty of this must be the only solace to us here, as to you here. Indeed it is the only consolation; and from our sympathy vith a coming generation we may already derive a taste of happiness. Accordingly I make it no reproach to myself, to be sending Hafiz, too, to you at Waldheim.—Feuerbach's book s somewhat of a résumé of his own philosophy. . . . I heartily vish you may be allowed to delight yourself with this clear nd powerful mind."

There we must leave the Wagner-Hafiz question, tinged with he positivist optimism of Feuerbach. Already, however, we ee the tendency of Hans Sachs and "the Wanderer" invading heir creator's private thoughts. At present it is the resignation of Wotan in *Siegfried*, content to look on at the happiness of 'a coming generation"; for the *Ring* still seems to its author o represent but "one phase of the world," and still has its optimistic tag, perhaps itself inspired by Hafiz' "When sur-

passing beauty [?] hath annihilated a world of lovers, a fresh world springeth up to love from the invisible." In time that resignation will deepen in scope, and that arbitrary tag will disappear.

Pursuit of Hafiz has led me to anticipate a little. We must return to the epoch when the poem of *Das Rheingold* first stood complete, and "refreshment" was sorely needed by its author himself.

"The middle of last week I completed my work, but was very much exhausted"—so Wagner tells Uhlig, Nov. 10, '52—"and as the weather quite unexpectedly turned fine, I made a three days' tour among the alps with Herwegh and Wille (a Hamburger who has settled by the lake here); to Glarus, the Glärnisch with the Klönthal, and the lake of Wallenstatt. Unfortunately this expedition also did me harm: in our first night-quarters I couldn't sleep a wink, for disquiet; on the following day—in spite of the most fearful prostration—I forced myself to go on again, for sake of my companions; and that—like every other tour de force—entirely undid me."

The above is the only reference in Wagner's published letters (excepting, of course, those addressed to Frau Wille) to a friend whose acquaintance he had recently made, and whose hospitality he was frequently to enjoy during the next few years: Dr François Wille, who hereafter gave him shelter in that terrible month preceding his rescue by the young King of Bavaria. To Dr Wille and his wife — authoress of a tangled skein of Wagnerian reminiscences, relieved by fifteen authentic letters*—we must therefore devote a provisional word or two.

Half Swiss by birth, "with Burgundian blood in his veins," François Wille had sown his wild oats at the university of Göttingen much about the same time as Wagner at that of Leipzig, and returned to his native Hamburg to become a journalist and newspaper-editor. Here his position naturally brought him into contact with many a man of letters, such as

* "*Erinnerungen* etc. von Eliza Wille, geb. Sloman" (Berlin 1894), originally published in the *Deutsche Rundschau* of Feb. and March 1887.

Hoffmann v. Fallersleben;* Gutzkow and Hebbel, on the other hand, he avoided—one point of sympathy with Wagner. In 1845 he married the eldest daughter of a wealthy Hamburg ship-owner; a lady, some two or three years his senior, who already had published some poems, and in later life wrote a couple of novels. In the memorable 1848 he was elected to the Frankfort Parliament as deputy from the Hanoverian Marches: "in response to his appeal," says his wife, "volunteers enlisted at our house for service in Schleswig-Holstein." After the suppression of the revolutionary movement in Germany, and the retrocession of Schleswig-Holstein to Denmark, "residence in Hamburg was no longer convenient to those who had taken part in all that had happened," so Frau Wille tells us; but "of our own accord we left: no political persecution drove us forth." Having fought all his life for "democracy and free institutions," Wille decided to emigrate to a land where he "might see them put in practice," though he played no part in the public affairs of his new district for a whole decad after his settling at Mariafeld near Meilen, a few miles out of Zurich, towards the end of 1851.

Wagner's first visit to Mariafeld was paid at the end of May 52, in response to an invitation from Frau Wille, who suggests that it was Prof. Ettmüller who had apprised them of his residence in Zurich (323 *ant.*); but as she also says that Herwegh had been personally known to her husband for some months past, i.e. for almost all the time they had lived there, there is no need to subsume so casual an intermediary. Evidently Herwegh had introduced the two male W.'s to one another in town, and thus some sense may at last be made of Wagner's first letter, in which he not only sends "best greetings to Herr Wille," but also says: 'Among my restoratives I certainly shall count a visit, and with your permission several visits, to Mariafeld; and it would not have needed your kind invitation at all, to determine me to make one" (May 18, '52). One hardly writes in that strain to a lady one has met only once in one's life, and that nine years ago, unless one already has formed some sort of intimate relations with her husband. On the threshold of Frau Wille's reminiscences,

* Frau Wille numbers Heinrich Heine among his "personal friends" at Hamburg; but that cannot well have been, since Heine had removed to Paris in 1831, and she speaks of her husband as still a student at Göttingen in 1832.

accordingly, we are faced with a patch of loose memory, and involuntarily prepared for their containing so little real information as to their nominal object's first Swiss period. The *Tannhäuser* overture had been conducted by Wagner only two months before this letter, the *Flying Dutchman* opera but a fortnight; yet Frau Wille has not one word of recollection of what still was the talk of the place. So we must not look for anything out-of-the-way in this quarter, and can fully believe the lady when she assures us that: "In our house Wagner found no deification; among us his great musical genius could not come into effect. What he found with us was friendship and simple hospitality. With that he was content. We almost forgot that he was entitled to make higher claims." At this epoch it rather was ignorance, than oblivion—at least, on the lady's side; and ignorance was bliss, for it enabled Wagner to enjoy an occasional Saturday to Monday unoppressed by a laurel-wreath.

"It was on a Sunday in May of the year 1852 that Wagner first came to us, and in the company of Georg Herwegh, whose 'Gedichte eines Lebendigen' had staggered an age to which we all belonged more or less. Since then, his voice had died out. My husband had known him personally for the last few months. —The gentlemen were soon engaged in most animated conversation: past and present gave matter enough. The mutiny of an artistic-revolutionary spirit, which fain would open up new paths for music, under the title 'Opera and Drama' had made the name of the composer famous as a writer too. Without being able to hear his latest-finished works performed [singular that this should be plural], Wagner was struggling in Zurich toward his goal. Just now he was deep in the study of the Edda, so he said—and talked incessantly of Stabreim. He spoke appreciatively of his Zurich refuge and the 'sense of pleasure at living in freedom from the relations' which had revolted him [at Dresden] to his deepest soul.—From that day forward he came often to Mariafeld, accompanied by his wife or by Herwegh, not seldom for all the day. Frequently, also, they remained overnight."

What a pity it is, that Dr Wille himself did not contribute his quota to these reminiscences! Then we might perhaps have been given, not merely what the conversations were *about*, but some vital fragments from them, something that would substantiate the latter part of Wagner's remark to his host, "You're not

musical; you say nothing, make nothing! What matter? You have life. When *you* are by, one comes by thoughts of one's own." For other things besides politics and stabreim were discussed at these meetings: "The gentlemen's topics could interest me only in part: Herwegh was attending Prof. Ludwig's lectures on physiology; Wille spoke about Carlyle and Stuart Mill—literature, art and philosophy were a rich theme for them all. As a rule the gentlemen spent the forenoon in my husband's study, alone. When I was present, I sat busied with my needlework, listening to everything, seldom joining in. The manners of the age to which I owed my bringing-up and education held it presumptuous for a woman to take part in conversation about things she knows but superficially, without ever having gone to the bottom of them." Yet Frau Wille had read "an infinite amount" from her youth up, and "delighted to explore that wonder-world in which the thoughts of eminent men hold sway"; and, by omitting to preserve some tangible record of those "thoughts that came to" Wagner in her presence, she clearly missed a golden opportunity. When by chance she does perpetuate even so simple an expression as his impromptu greeting to her husband, "Good morning, Adam!" we are doubly grateful; since it gives in two syllables a picture at once of host and guest, and shews what the latter valued in this household far more than mere "root-digging"—the straightforward simplicity and commonsense of François Wille, in whom, unlike the generality of Wagner's associates, a sense of humour was by no means lacking.

In connection with these frequent visits to a home of some pretence to spacious ease, it is of interest to note that the guest is haunted throughout this autumn with the idea of founding a cosy rustic habitation for himself. Once again, moreover, the thought is intimately allied with that Walhall of his present poem. "Herrliche Wohnung, wonnige Hausrath," he found exemplified at Mariafeld; what wonder if he wished to copy it, on a modest scale? It is no longer "a cottage by a wood" (p. 4 *ant.*) that he desires, or a tiny "peasant-holding" (84*n*). No: "As it is clear that I can only lead an artificial life henceforth, i.e. a life for art, I mean to do all I can to keep myself artificially on foot. I'm now so possessed with the wish to own a little house with garden in the country here, up on the hills above the lake [like the Willes], to cultivate the little property, surround myself with

flowers and animals, and make a comfortable nest for visitors, that I'm bent on executing it at all costs" (to U., Aug. 9, '52). The revenue from the commencing spread of his operas is to provide the wherewithal, but he cannot wait to hoard it up: "So I have discussed the matter with my Swiss friends, and determined to have inquiries made for a small estate, not to exceed 10,000 francs in price [£400]. As soon as I can pay a deposit of 2000 f. the thing can be arranged at once; the interest on the remainder, as also the gradual liquidation of the capital, I then shall defray from my future takings. . . . As I and my wife will some day die childless, however, and a *heritable* property would therefore be of no use to us, I should prefer if somebody would lend me the whole purchase-money on the sole condition that the estate, embellished and improved by my own care and at my cost, should fall to him or his after my death and that of my wife." Sept. 27, manifestly after one of his Sunday visits to Mariafeld, he writes Uhlig again: "Yesterday I saw a beautiful little country estate; if I could only have that!"—humorously adding, "Do tell Lüttichau!" By November the idea has had to be modified: "With the little country estate things stand so-so! I'm no longer thinking of a purchase (for many reasons); but I should like to take a long lease of a pretty country-house with a largish garden. I'm looking out for one now; but the right thing hasn't turned up yet. I shan't desist, however, and hope to be able to offer my guests good shelter next summer," he writes on the 10th. A week to ten days later: "Above all, you must think of a *long leave of absence* next summer. If all goes well, and according to my wish, I shall be able to receive you in a—splendid garden and country-house." From which it would seem that he had a definite site in eye, and in all probability in the neighbourhood of Mariafeld, though Frau Wille tells us absolutely nothing of a plan as to which her advice must have often been taken. Nevertheless, it all came to nothing; the utter failure of the Berlin negotiations *re Tannhäuser* dried up the chief expected source of income. Not till another four years have passed, does Wagner attain to a rural sanctum of his own, and then through Wesendonck's generosity.

"In the autumn of 1852 Wagner gave us the pleasure of seeking recreation with us after a spell of hard work, and Herwegh often came with him," Frau Wille meanders on, unconsciously alluding

to *Das Rheingold;* but "of the work he had in hand Wagner did not talk; rather of the agreeableness of taking a holiday. His amiable humour made it plain that he was satisfied with the progress of his work." When we refer to the extracts from his letters quoted at the beginning of this chapter, and recall the state of suffering he was in, we can only conclude either that he had a wonderfully elastic temperament, or that his gentle chronicler and hostess was not particularly observant; that is to say, if she had already begun to make her "jottings"—which I very much doubt. Yet the period is pretty clearly defined by the following: "It was a marvellously fine late-autumn, and merry were the hours we spent in the open air. Wagner was ready for a walk quite early in the morning. Herwegh, on the contrary, liked to lie for hours in oriental ease upon the study sofa, ruminating his problems: when roused, he would resign himself with the apathy of boredom, and shamble after; so that Wille once compared him to a sleepy foot.—My youngest sister and her little girl were staying at Mariafeld then. With my sister, Grace had entered the house. The gentlemen were not to have everything their own way; we ladies exercised a salutary pressure, and often sprang the trio asunder. . . . Now and then we rambled on the heights [Wagner palpably house-hunting], taking the children with us; and I have happy memories of a water-excursion to the Au, when the gentlemen's hands felt the unaccustomed weight of the oars. We also visited the Ufenau together [Hutten's last sanctuary], about which Herwegh had written a poem. At home we would sit at table after supper, talking of things new and old according to the inspiration of the moment."

Frau Wille has also something to tell us about Wagner at the pianoforte; but, as there is no element of date in it, we may conveniently reserve that for next volume. Already we have given our hero holiday enough, and now must send him back to work.

The same complaint of nerve-fatigue that formed a running accompaniment to the *Rheingold* poem ushers in the revision of the two *Siegfrieds:* "I must stop; my head's getting bad. . . . About my health another day: I'm obliged to avoid all exertion, even that of too long walks." This to Uhlig in a letter signed "Your Nibelungen-prince Alberich," of about the 18th to 20th of November, 1852, a few days prior to which the said revision must

have been commenced; for we read, "I'm working at the 'young Siegfried' now, and shall soon be through with it. Then for 'Siegfried's Death'—which will detain me longer; in that there are two scenes to be entirely recast (the Norns and the scene of Brünhilde with the Valkyries), but above all the ending also—moreover, everything to be very considerably retouched. The whole will then be—out with it! I'm brazen enough to say it!—the grandest poem ever written!"

Presumably the actual date of commencing to revise YOUNG SIEGFRIED would be the 15th of November. By the 10th the poet had only recovered from his exertions with *Rheingold* sufficiently to be able to write a promised long letter to Uhlig, in which he had said nothing about resumption of his labours; whereas the 12th is the date appended to a musical autograph which he contributes to an art-album (see vol. ii, 279), that autograph consisting of a fragment from the said "scene of Brünhilde with the Valkyries," either to be numbered with the "fugitive attempts at composition of Siegfried's Tod" in the late autumn of 1848 at Dresden, or to be assigned to the summer of 1850 (pp. 224-5 *ant.*).* Its extrusion at the present moment is a kind of clearing the decks for action: looking up his Siegfried papers, preliminary to settling down to the revision, this morsel of a chorus (subsequently developed into the "Ritt-Motiv") would once more pass under his eyes. The next day or so would be devoted to reading his "two Siegfrieds" through; Sunday the 14th would pretty certainly be spent on a visit to Mariafeld, in weather so propitious; and he would start the week on Monday with the beginning of the end. No other date, or mention of the work, shall we meet in any letter till the whole *Ring* poem stands complete, some five weeks hence.

Before inquiring into the nature and extent of the changes effected in "the two Siegfrieds" at the latter end of 1852, it will assist us if we make a retrospect, commencing with the famous letter of the 20th November 1851 to Liszt, and the reader must kindly be indulgent if a sentence or two has already been used in course of this volume:—

* The last mention of music for *Siegfried's Tod* had been to F. Heine, Apr. 26, '51: "In May I shall get to the composition of my *Siegfried*"; but we know what that May brought—the draft of *Young Siegfried*, to be followed next month by its poem.

"In the autumn of 1848 I sketched out the complete myth of the Nibelungen, such as it has thenceforth become my poetic property. 'Siegfrieds Tod'* was a first attempt to give one chief catastrophe of the extensive plot as a drama for our theatre: after long hesitation, in the autumn of 1850 I was finally about to draft the music for this drama, when the recognised impossibility of getting it adequately performed, no matter where, diverted me from the affair. To relieve myself of this despairing mood, I wrote my book 'Opera and Drama.' Last Spring, however, you made so inspiring an impression on me with your article on Lohengrin that I gladly flew once more—for your sake—to the execution of a drama, as I wrote you at the time. But 'Siegfrieds Tod,' I knew, was impossible for the nonce; I perceived that I must first prepare the way for it by another drama, and so I seized upon a plan I long had cherished, that of making the '*young Siegfried*' the subject of a poem: here everything that is partly narrated, partly assumed as half-known, in 'Siegfrieds Tod,' was to be actually represented in fresh and lively traits. Quickly was that poem sketched and finished." The plan of a Young Siegfried had been dimly "cherished" since so long ago as the end of 1848 (cf. vol. ii, 281), if not since 1846 (*ibid.* 152). Its poem indeed was "quickly" written, perhaps too quickly, for it merely took three weeks, from June 3 to 24 of '51. But "This 'young Siegfried' also is nothing but a fragment, and cannot produce its right impression as a separate entity until it has taken its due place in the collective whole—a place my present plan assigns to it together with 'Siegfried's Death.' In both these dramas a quantity of necessary associations remained left to nothing but recital, or in fact the hearer's power of combination; everything that lends the plot and persons of both these dramas their infinitely moving and far-reaching significance had to be left outside the representation and merely conveyed to thought."

Ere passing to the next phase, the reader is begged to observe that the performance of each of the dramas *separately* is contemplated, though not until after they have been performed as a connected whole and "in rapid succession" (*ibid.*). The same

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* "As I now at last perceive," adds the *Communication* (*P.* I. 390) in an account written within a few days of the above, and almost identical in wording.

intention is publicly suggested at the end of the *Communication*, definitely declared elsewhere in this letter (261 and 258 *ant.*), and in fact had been expressed in the very earliest mention of *Young Siegfried* (238 *ant.*) just prior to its sketching out. A certain amount of narrative would therefore have to be retained in both these works, for each to tell its story intelligibly (a remark equally applicable to *Die Walküre*); but an uncertain amount would have to be omitted, and if from the Young Siegfried now, presumably from its elder brother a little earlier. That broaches an entirely new question.

The fact of the existence of two "Siegfried's Tods," 1848 and 1852-3 (the latter identical with *Gtdg*), is a matter of pretty general knowledge: the existence of a *third*, namely of a "Siegfried's Tod" modified to some extent in 1851 owing to the creation of "Der junge Siegfried," has not so much as been suspected hitherto. Yet I believe that the simple hypothesis of a modification of *Siegfried's Tod* dating from the summer or early autumn of 1851, and *partially* retained in the ultimate version, will account for most of the slight inconsequences in *Götterdämmerung* that have puzzled so many a student. It is far too late in the present volume, to go into the evidence of *three different styles of diction* in this poem, though it was that which first directed me to what I deem no mean discovery. At the beginning of volume iv, with our energies refreshed by the break, we shall arrive at the actual private issue of the printed *Ring* (Feb. 53), and I propose then to deal with the whole subject at sufficient length. Here I can only adduce the broader reasons of a faith that in my own mind already amounts to a certainty. I will begin with the external evidence, which, though scanty as yet, may be expected to increase when the topic is ventilated:—

Is there anything that points to a manuscript of the poem of *Siegfried's Tod* intermediate between the 1848 original (*Ges. Schr.* II.—*Prose Works* VIII.) and the version of 1852 (a version reproduced with hardly a syllable changed in the present *Gtdg* textbooks)?—If the reader will turn back to page 222 he will see that in the Spring of 1850 Wagner had offered his *Siegfrieds Tod* to be published as a mute literary product. In July of that year he writes Uhlig: "So you tell me that Wigand will not even print the Siegfried. God be praised! He's more sensible than me. . . . Leave the printing of Siegfried alone; it would only cause

confusion: keep the manuscript." That manuscript can but have been a fair copy (possibly taken by Karl Ritter), as in this same letter the author proposes to commence the musical composition; which he could not have done in absence of the poem. So we have a fair copy of *Siegfrieds Tod* in Uhlig's keeping from the summer of 1850 onward—until the summer of 1851, when he is on the point of paying his visit to Zurich, and Wagner begs him (June 24) to bring the original score of *Lohengrin*, "as we perhaps could try a little of it over," adding: "Do bring the copy of Siegfrieds Tod with you as well:—is there anything else I might want?—I can think of nothing of importance."

We can understand Wagner's wanting to "try over a little" of *Lohengrin*, as he was thinking of presently setting to work on the music for his Siegfrieds. But for what purpose would he require this 1850 fair copy of *Siegfried's Tod?* He had completed the poem of *Young Siegfried* that very morning, and must still have possessed the original manuscript of the *Tod*, or he could never have written *Y. S.* to fit in with it—the woodbird's songs, for instance. As a matter of fact, during the time that Uhlig had the copy of the *Tod* in his keeping at Dresden, we have heard of Wagner's reading that poem aloud in Zurich (233 *ant.*). Still possessing the 1848 original, then, for what purpose did he want the 1850 copy? There are three possible answers. 1) That he wished to present it to some Zurich friend. 2) That the copy was itself an emendation of the original. 3) That he *now* desired to revise the *Tod* to some extent—maybe by omitting certain lengths of narrative, as later with *Young* Siegfried — and contemplated making the alterations on the duplicate, as he had already done with *Lohengrin* (see vol. ii, 150), rather than mangle its original. The three answers, which I have here suggested, are by no means mutually destructive; which of them is correct, or whether all three are, must be a subject for future inquiry.*

The *internal* evidence of an interim revision, on the other hand, is so striking that I will at once bring forward two of its most salient instances:—

It will be remembered that, when the poem of *Die Walküre* was finished, Wagner wrote Uhlig (July 2, '52), "The two Siegfrieds will now have to be strongly retouched, especially in what-

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* See footnote to page 441 *infra.*

ever concerns the Gods themselves, for this part of the myth has since acquired a much preciser and more moving (*ergreifendere*) physiognomy" (p. 331 *ant.*); in other words, Wotan by then had abdicated. Therefore when Alberich says "der soll mich nun rächen, den Ring gewinnen, dem Wälsung und Wotan zum Hohn" (*Gtdg* 41) we may be positive that those words were not invented for him in 1852; they are contradicted in fact two pages earlier, "an den Wälsung verlor er Macht und Gewalt . . . nicht *ihn* [Wotan] fürcht' ich mehr." Yet they do not exist in the original poem of 1848; ergo they were introduced in a previous revision, and presumably in 1851, when the whole of the opening scene of act ii, between Alberich and Hagen, must perforce have been recast.*

The strongest proof of all is that contained in the closing scene of act ii. Here we have a structural alteration of no small magnitude. In 1848, instead of the last words being those of the three conspirators, Hagen, Gunther and Brünnhilde, on Siegfried's *return* to the forecourt he was made to address Gunther in nearly the same terms he now uses before he leaves it to attend to the festivities—in one respect a better arrangement, as it reduced Brünnhilde's period of inaction; Gutrune was given a fragment of conversation with Brünnhilde; and the curtain came down on a final *chorus* for men and women behind the wings. That scene has now been swept away, as a whole; yet see what remains of it, and where! The men in *S. T.* of '48 had to sing, "Allvater! Waltender Gott! Allweiser! Weihlicher Hort! Wotan! Wotan! Wende dich her"; men and women together, "Weiset die herrliche, heilige Schaar, hieher zu horchen dem Weihgesang!" In *Gtdg* (*S. T.* of '52), while Hagen is invoking his "Alben-Vater! gefallener Fürst!"—in itself a strange expres-

* How, for example, could Alberich in '51 continue to speak of the Giants (plural) as having *begotten* a "Wurm" as warder of their Hoard, after Fafner himself had appeared as that Wurm? Moreover, certain lines from Alberich's narrative had been bodily transferred to the Wanderer in act i of *Y. S.*, and therefore must have been cancelled in the *Tod*. Similarly, a large part of Siegfried's narrative in act iii of the original *Tod* would necessarily be jettisoned as early as '51, since the youth no longer goes forth in *Y. S.* to avenge his father's death before attacking the Wurm; and we accordingly may assign the first stanza of his present self-history (text 72-3) to that interim revision, thus accounting for a comparative tameness of diction, noticeable in all these assumedly intermediate changes.

sion for '52—Gunther *and* Brünnhilde exclaim "Allrauner! rächender Gott! Schwurwissender Eideshort! Wotan! Wotan! wende dich her! weise die schrecklich heilige Schaar, hieher zu horchen dem Racheschwur!" It is quite impossible that Wagner should have penned, or rather adapted, those lines after his Brünnhilde had sent the gods her message of repudiation in act i; especially as he had carefully expunged Siegfried's invocation of Wotan, and Brünnhilde's of Fricka, to hallow the spear but a few pages previously. They do not exist, however, in the '48 original, except in the form just quoted from its chorus. Could you wish for stronger proof of an interim revision? Could you receive a proof that threw more light upon the contradictions in the existing text?

Reserving details for next volume, I may further state in general that I believe the *closing scenes of all three acts* had been more or less revised at some period anterior to 1852. As for the *opening* scenes, those of acts i and iii demonstrably date back to '48, to all practical intents; whereas the opening of the prologue, the Norns' scene, of course is purely '52 work. With the opening of act ii, Hagen and Alberich, I have just been dealing; but the style of diction in Hagen's "watch" of act i—a monologue that has no counterpart in '48—appears to me also of intermediate origin.*

Our retrospect has now been cast far enough to give a fairly exact idea of the position in November 51, when Wagner announced to Liszt his determination to turn his two Siegfrieds into a trilogy with a long dramatic prologue. He already has upon his hands a dilogy—if I may be allowed the term—whereof the *senior* member, though the later in dramatic sequence, had undergone no inconsiderable amendment (according to my theory)

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* After sending the above to the printers, I have been made acquainted with the result of an inquiry which I had meantime instigated. That result places me in the dilemma of having to continue to speak *ex hypothesi*, though I now have positive proof of the existence of at least *one* version of *Siegfried's Tod* intermediate between those of 1848 and 1852. It has enabled me, however, to lighten the present chapter by omission of a couple of pages of fine-spun argument, and in my next volume I hope to be at liberty to set the matter clearly forth. To obviate wild guesses, I ought to add that the interim version I know of is hoarded *nowhere* in Germany.—W. A. E.

in consequence of the birth of its junior; and now he recognises that the junior also must necessarily be affected by the proposed expansion, albeit he may not as yet perceive that the whole spirit of his work will be changed by that bringing of Wotan into the foreground. "The great conjuncture through which alone the figures gain their vast significance was left to mere epic recital," he has just told Uhlig (251 *ant.*), thus suggesting that the said great conjuncture—*der grosse Zusammenhang*—had not even yet presented itself to his mind under a materially different aspect. True, he is struggling toward another conception of the meaning of the myth already, for he adds that "the fashioning motive (*das gestaltende Motiv*) down to Siegfried's death" will be the *renunciation of love* by whoever would wield the power of the gold. But is that in reality the "*gestaltende* Motiv" of the finished poem? Unhesitatingly I answer: No. Commentators have seized on those words as a pass-key, forgetting that they were written many a month before the trilogy itself was creatively taken in hand. The motive undoubtedly was intended by Wagner the reasoner to govern his poetic work—*after* the two Siegfrieds had been penned; in fact he drags it in, I might almost say by force, at the beginning and end of the *Ring*, as though the reasoner were jogging the poet to make use of it: but where is its effective influence perceptible in actual course of the drama? Alberich himself is prompted rather by revenge for baffled lust, when he curses "love" and wins the gold that is to give him power. To which of the other characters is the problem substantially presented in this form, presented as a conflict between two potent motives in the determination of a line of future conduct? Scarcely to Wotan in *Das Rheingold;* only to those hazy ruminations on his past wherewith he begins the else so pregnant monologue in *Die Walküre.* Certainly neither to Siegmund nor Siegfried; not to Brünnhilde, by all the powers; not to Fafner and Fasolt (to them Freia hardly meant *love*); neither to Gunther nor Hunding, to Mime nor Hagen. It was an antinomy propounded by the reasoning faculty, not dissimilar to the hapless discovery that Siegfried was the youth who could never learn to fear; and luckily the *poet's* instinct would have far less to do with it, even as matter for dialogue. Indisputably, the deeper secret of his drama had not dawned on him when he drew up the formula;

the open secret that, not "love," but "renunciation," or sacrificial sympathy (the Mitleid of *Parsifal*), was the only true antithesis and antidote to lust of power. His own Wotan and his own Brünnhilde—the Brynhild of the *Walküre*—were gradually to teach him that.

Under the circumstances, the changes proposed in *Young Siegfried* toward the end of 1851 * are of interest almost solely insofar as they afford some idea of its original configuration. With a brief account of them our retrospect may end.

"Coming after the other [contemplated] dramas, my 'Young Siegfried' will naturally have to be submitted to several alterations now, in particular some beneficial curtailments of the narrative portion," says Wagner to Liszt in the much-cited letter of Nov. 20, '51. In its fellow to Uhlig of Nov. 12 we had one hint of the matter thus to be beneficially excised: "Imagine for yourself the contents of Brünhilde's narration—in the last scene of the 'young Siegfried'—the fate of Siegmund and Siegelind," etc. (252 *ant.*). The epistle to Liszt yields a much ampler harvest: "Two chief-moments of my myth still wait to be set forth, and both of them are indicated in the 'young Siegfried': the first in the lengthy narration of Brünnhilde after her awakening (third act); the second in the scenes between Alberich and the Wanderer in the second, and the Wanderer and Mime in the first act.—That it is not merely reflection that has determined me here, but also the splendid matter for portrayal contained in those moments themselves, you may easily realise if you take a closer look at that material. Imagine to yourself the wonderfully fatal love of Siegmund and Siegelind . . . [326 *ant.*]. . . . Imagine this wealth of incentive—such as I have suggested in the scene between the Wanderer and the Wala, and at greater length in the said narration of Brünnhilde—imagine it the subject of a drama to precede the two Siegfrieds . . . [*loc. cit.*]. . . . To give everything entire, however, these dramas must still be preceded by a long prologue: *the Rape of the Rhinegold.* Its subject will be the complete presentation of everything relating to that Rape, to the creation of the Nibelungen-hoard, the abduction of that Hoard by Wodan, and Alberich's curse, that transpires by way of

* At this epoch he makes no proposal to alter the *Tod;* another argument in favour of its having been recently revised.

narrative in the 'young Siegfried.'—Through the very plainness of this method I shall be enabled not only to get rid of all my present long recitals (*alles, jetzt so breites Erzählungsartige*)—or at least to condense them to a pithy terseness—but shall gain sufficient space to enhance the fulness of associations in the most enthralling manner (*um die Fülle der Beziehungen auf das Ergreifendste zu steigern*), whereas with the earlier, half epic method I was obliged to dock everything of much of its force. I will simply give you one example:—Alberich ascends from the depths of the earth to the three daughters of the Rhine," and so on.

Though this excerpt unfortunately lapses into vagueness toward the end, its main body shews with great distinctness what *Siegfried* (let me waive "the young" in future) had once contained for certain. Roughly speaking, the subject of the present *Walküre* was conveyed in a "half epic" vehicle, one long (!) part being allotted to Brünnhilde shortly after her awakening, the other distributed between the Wanderer and the Wala—not yet individualised as Erda—at the beginning of act iii. The *Rheingold* story was divided between the Alberich-Wanderer scene in act ii—remark the precedence given to Alberich—and the Wanderer-Mime scene in act i. Here it will be observed that the Wanderer's function throughout the original *Siegfried* is purely that of an interlocutor, a kind of Greek chorus, and it is by no means clear that he reveals his identity to any of his questioners or answerers, any more than he now does to Mime. On the other hand, nothing is said of any scene between the Wanderer and Siegfried, or of the Wanderer's arousing Fafner; yet that does not exclude the pre-existence of those scenes (their *tendency* is another matter), and the morsels of superfluous narrative still given to Siegfried himself in his encounter with the Wanderer distinctly suggest a survival from the "half epic" treatment of 51. Finally, I have to remark that Brünnhilde's "lengthy narration" is obviously one of the instances where the author proposes by excision to "gain sufficient space" for psychological developments.

In the regrettable, but surely remediable absence of the text of 1851, that is the nearest we can approach to an idea of the original poem without an inquiry into minutiæ of style etc., such as I will defer until next volume. Before proceeding to the *Siegfried* of 1852, however, I must caution the reader against too

hastily assuming either that *all* the changes foreshadowed by Wagner Nov. 51 were actually carried out Nov. 52, or that no fresh ones were introduced then. A twelvemonth's interval might easily conduct to another standpoint; and a twelvemonth that had seen the birth and maturing of two such epoch-making works as *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*.

Now that we have a general notion of the whole four dramas as they stood in the middle of November 1852, we can proceed with some confidence to the final stages of revision that brought the *Ring des Nibelungen* into practically its present form. *Rheingold* and *Walküre* have but recently been written, so that it is "the two Siegfrieds" alone that call for remanipulation. Of these their author naturally takes "the young" one first, and so will we.

Presumably it will be admitted by most judges that, with the saving exception of its closing third, act i of *Siegfried* is the low-water mark of the tetralogy from a dramatic point of view:* until the hero sets to work on his sword, we have next to nothing but an exposition of antecedents, and the burden thrown upon Mime, to supply semi-humorous relief, is almost more than the ablest mime can carry. It is a simple matter to account for. Three years had the author been immersed in essay-writing; for three years he had neither composed any music, nor heard one of his operas: his dramatic sense had dulled a little, and it was this act itself that was to quicken it again—followed by the conducting of the *Flying Dutchman* before the first two members of the *Ring* were written.

But I tremble to think what would have been the fate of *Siegfried*, had its first act ever been staged as left in 52, when Siegfried was positively *recalled* after his "Aus dem Wald fort" to listen to a lecture upon "fear." That Wagner did not correct this infelicitous arrangement before his poem first was published,†

* It must be distinctly understood that I am not dealing with the *music* here: in that there are passages such as Siegfried's "Es sangen die Vöglein" and "Aus dem Wald fort," the Wanderer's entry and exit, and Mime's terror-stricken soliloquy, that could have been composed by no one but Wagner at his best.—W. A. E.

† Probably not until the musical composition. In vol. iv I will give a rendering of the scene as it stood in the edition of 53. Meanwhile I may state that a reproduction, with an admirable commentary by H. v. Wolzogen, will be found in the *Bayr. Bl.* for 1896, pp. 205 et seq.

is sufficient proof that act i can hardly have been revised in 1852 at all. A year ago we saw him prepared to remove the Wanderer-Mime narratives; but when it came to glancing through this act for the purpose, he must have discovered that such a removal would banish the Wanderer himself as well, for there was absolutely no *action* possible between Wotan and a minor character like Mime—minor in the sense that he is not one of the first-class world-powers, such as Alberich. To have removed the Wanderer, on the other hand, would have been to leave the brunt of one whole act to no more than two characters; and at that audacity Wagner did not arrive until the *Tristan* period, nor altogether even then. So the Wanderer was left with his questions and answers, apparently, in the same condition as 1851;* and the only '52 change of importance in all this act I should imagine to reside in Mime's soliloquy between the departure of the Wanderer and the re-entry of Siegfried. Thus Wotan still is an onlooker pure and simple in act i; even the "head" Mime has lost through the wager, he returns to him as "useless" (53 ed.).

With act ii the Wanderer already takes more part in the action; that is to say, in the psychologic action. Confronted with an Alberich who had played so active a rôle in *Das Rheingold*, and in his presence, mere riddles and their solutions must be abandoned: whatever of the original "narrative" may be left, now becomes invective or mutual recrimination; a much more appropriate form for Emotional Drama. Just one instance: "Wird der neidliche Hort dem Niblung wieder gehören?"—in that question of Alberich's can we not detect a counterpart of the riddling scene in act i? But see how it figures now! Alberich himself follows it up with "Das sehrt dich mit ew'ger Sorge,"† and thus opens a window at least into his own soul. The same with the Wanderer-Erda scene in act iii, one of the very finest

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* A line or two may have been retouched, of course, such as those referring to the spear; but Mime's "Verfluchte Stahl, dass ich dich *gestohlen*," could scarcely be written after the scene between Sieglinde and Brünnhild in *Die Walküre* act iii.

† *Siegfried* textbook p. 45. I think it unnecessary, as a rule, to translate lines quoted from the *Ring*, since it may be taken for granted that all Wagnerian students who do not understand the language of the original at least possess the parallel German-English textbooks.

passages in the whole tetralogy in its present form: what would it have been with a dialogue treated similarly to the aforesaid riddling scene? And here the change of 52 must have gone much farther than in the last case: here Wotan, not merely professes abstention, as in the revised scene with Alberich, but definitely abdicates; and that was only possible to a Wotan who had lived through *Die Walküre*.

Just as there was one Wanderer scene left unchanged after change had been proposed, so another is evidently changed without specific warning. Though the greater portion of the encounter between Siegfried and his ancestor is palpably the work of 51 (to its disadvantage), an entirely new element is plainly introduced into it in this 52 revision,* namely the direct opposition offered by Wotan to the hero's advance. The original Wotan of the *Tod*, to whom Siegfried was to be a "warrant of might everlasting," could never have been disarmed by his chosen champion; that breaking of the spear of world-dominion is manifestly part of the development in 52, though, curiously enough, it had glimmered through a semi-casual reflection in the "Nibelungen-myth" of 48: "The Gods bring up Man for this high destiny, to be the canceller of their own guilt; and their aim would be attained even if in this human creation they annulled themselves, that is to say, if in the freedom of man's conscience they had to divest themselves of their immediate influence" (*P.* VII. 303). In that old prose-sketch it was a half-political allusion (see vol. ii, 273), and in the original *Tod* of a few weeks later it has no parallel; but now, in 1852, it is a logical sequel to the last two lines of *Die Walküre*, and thus the renunciation of Wotan is made voluntary and complete.

The most remarkable change of all, and the last in *Siegfried* I shall touch on here, is that traceable in the closing scene. If Brünnhilde were to be deprived of a "lengthy narration"—and certainly she has none now—the beneficial loss must undoubtedly be made good some other way; which would naturally lead to the remodelling of a considerable portion of this scene, and

* Observe Siegfried's "Bleibst du mir stumm?"—as if the Wanderer had formerly made no reply at all to his "d'rum sprich" (text 82); then weigh the Wanderer's words that come between, ending with "nicht wecke mir Neid, er vernichtete dich und mich," and you will recognise that the whole tragedy of this scene was grafted upon it in 1852.

a remodelling far more carefully effected than in the former instances; so that it may not be an easy matter exactly to determine what parts of this particular scene are old, and what parts new. Some clue, however, may be derived from the author's remark to Liszt when sending him the original poem Nov. 51: "Now that you will no longer have to cast a side-glance on your public, you will not need to worry, for example, as to what will be thought of the 'Woman' by those people who can conceive no other type of 'Woman' than their own wife [a German housewife], or—if they soar very high—some girl of their acquaintance." Roeckel also had been told in August 51 that Siegfried "wakes Brünhilde—the *woman*—to the most blissful love-embraces";* but Wagner had hastened to add the sobering generalisation, "We never shall be what we ought to be, till *woman is awoken.*" It was the "redeeming woman," then—the same of whom he talks so much in his *Communication*, also August 51—that Wagner had conceived in the Brynhild of his original poem; the Brynhild for whom the Wanderer had prognosticated an "erlösende Weltenthat" (*Sd* 78—"a world-redeeming deed"), the Brynhild whose first words in the *Tod* were a spurring of Siegfried to "new deeds," and who calls him here "Du hehrster *Thaten* thöriger Hort"; the redeeming *woman*, in place of the original conception of Siegfried as the world-redeeming *man*.

Mark the transformation, now that Hafiz has pressed upon Wagner a draught from his wine-cup—as we saw in the *Rheingold* weeks. The passion of Brynhild is fanned of a sudden to furnace-heat: "keusches Licht lodert in Gluthen; himmlisches Wissen *stürmt* mir dahin,"† and her "hehrster Thaten" is promptly followed by "lachend will ich erblinden; lachend lass' uns verderben." It is powerful to an extraordinary degree, almost delirious when faithfully rendered by the performer; but the "erlösende

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* "Siegfried durchdringt das Feuer, und erweckt Brünhilde—das Weib, zur wonnigsten Liebesumarmung"; words that suggest a literal reminiscence; so that without much hesitation one might substitute for the first two lines of page 78 in the textbook the following three, "Brünhilde—das Weib, weckt hold sich der Held zur wonnigsten Liebesumarmung," and thus regain their form of '51.

† *Siegfried* text p. 96; plainly one of the 1852 changes, since *Gtdg*, in full agreement with the original *S. Tod*, says "Was Götter mich wiesen, *gab* ich dir: heiliger Runen reichen Hort" (*Gtdg* text p. 10, cf. 56, 58, 68).

Weltenthat"? Wotan himself despairs of it, for he resignedly tells Erda "Was jene *auch* wirken—dem ewig Jungen weicht in Wonne der Gott" (*Sd* 78); lines that look as if they had been forced on the poet's reflection while fair-copying this poem in light of the whole.

It needed but one flash of memory on Brynhild's part (cf. *Wlkr.* 37), before that "heavenly wisdom stormed from" her, and Walhall and world might have been redeemed in truth. She had only to bid Siegfried both pledge their love and crown his "deeds" by casting the ring, he prized so little, into the waters of the Rhine, and—there would have been no need of "Siegfried's Death." There was the "optimistic" ending, one might almost say crying aloud to the poet; the ending that would have made of his work an actual "trilogy," and saved him from all the pitfalls of that "grand heroic opera" which had vexed his mind so long. It would have been a singular fulfilment of his "burn the score" (*227 ant.*), and I sometimes wonder, did he contemplate that ending for a moment when he wrote (or retouched?) those lines, "*wachend* wirkt dein wissendes Kind erlösende Weltenthat." But "redemption" there was not to be: complete and utter tragedy was the only true poetic justice after Wotan's original sin. So Wotan's daughter is "blinded" by the laughter of love: "Fahr' hin, Walhall's leuchtende Welt! . . . Ende in Wonne, du ewig Geschlecht! . . . Götter-Dämm'rung,* dunkle herauf! Nacht der Vernichtung, neble herein!—Mir strahlt zur Stunde Siegfried's Stern"—she cries in the final duet, in tremendous contrast to the "Heil dem Tage der uns umleuchtet" etc, which Siegfried is singing by her side, and even to the "ist mir ewig" in which they both combine. There we surely have the bolder, more full-blooded touch of 52, parallel with the thinner stroke of 51. And once again, in the last words of the drama, the "leuchtende Liebe" (51?) is wedded to the new frenzy of a "lachender Tod." Gods, redemption, everything but

* Note the earliest appearance of the last element in the *Ring's* evolution; it needed but one step (in 1863) to turn this line of 1852 into the final title of the closing drama. Note also the "zur Stunde," "for this hour," i.e. for the moment of delirium—a point neglected by all the translators—and compare it with Kundry's "Nur eine Stunde mein." After that moment of oblivious intoxication, the treachery of *Siegfried's Tod* descends on its victims with far more of the character of a Nemesis.

I and Thou, are whelmed in a tumult of the senses such as no dramatist had ventured yet to set upon the stage. *This Siegfried* is no longer "a fairy-tale told to a child," no longer the "idyll" or "scherzo" the analyst has short-sightedly christened it.

"Nacht der Vernichtung, neble herein!" So strangely prescient of the second act of *Tristan*, so strongly reminiscent of that "Reich des Nichtmehrseins" in the programme to the *Tannhäuser* overture (Feb. 52), those words foretell the overshadowing of Siegfried's Death by the Gloaming of the Gods, and form a bridge between the new close of the younger *Siegfried* and the Waltraute scene in the final drama, where Brynhild flouts "Der Götter heiligen Himmels-Nebel." They unexpectedly do something else, something of more prosaic use to us; for the "Nebel" compound in reality supplies a missing date. Its counterpart occurs in a letter to Uhlig of Nov. 27, where, speaking of his projected *Faust* symphony of ten years back, Wagner says: "I gave the whole thing up, and—true to my nature—set to work on the 'Flying Dutchman,' with which I redeemed myself from all the haze of Instrumental music (*aus allem Instrumental-Musik-Nebel*) into the certainty of Drama." Knowing how constantly an expression from his work of the last day or two will repeat itself in his private correspondence, and vice versâ, I can confidently assert that within a couple of days on either side of Nov. 27, '52, the Waltraute scene of the present *Götterdämmerung* was all but finished; accordingly, that the revision of the younger *Siegfried* can hardly have occupied a fortnight. And that tallies with the letter of mid-November: "I shall soon be through with 'Young Siegfried.' Then for 'Siegfrieds Tod'—which will detain me longer. In that there are two scenes to be entirely recast (the Norns and the scene of Brünhilde with the Valkyries), but above all the ending also—moreover everything to be very considerably retouched" (436 *ant.*).

I have already furnished reasons for assuming that *Siegfried's Tod* had been partially revised at some prior date, and have indicated the chief places where marks of such an operation may still be traced. The revision it confessedly underwent in 1852 was of far more importance, going to the root, and turning a "grand heroic opera" into the most overwhelming of tragedies. But—it could not altogether conceal the grand-operatic origin, which, in spite of the profoundest, the most virile, the most uplifting music

ever heard, still betrays itself in certain scenes; for the main bulk of the poem, even as we have it now, was written in its author's *Lohengrin* period, the period of a full stage and 'powerful' situations. Putting the third act on one side for a moment, as a creation so unique from the first that the *Ring* itself has no other quite its equal; putting also on one side the two new scenes of 52—there is little to choose between the first two acts of *Siegfried's Tod*, in point either of depth or of dramatic grasp, and the first two acts of *Lohengrin* (poem 1845). Act i of the work last-named, in fact, is technically better planned; it has *no* change of scene, whereas the *Tod* has two, if we include the prologue, as include we must. The mutual resemblance of the *second* acts, in the matter of build, is as complete as possible with two different subjects; in the later of the poems we recognise here the same original intent as in the earlier, to offer the eye an imposing spectacle, led gradually out of the gloom of night. The spectacle, no doubt, is not there for itself alone; but it is courted, rather than eschewed; and in each case the picture's high light is a woman's fierce denunciation. In each case, moreover, that denunciation hinges on an element foreign alike to the beliefs and the experience of the modern mind, namely the operation of—Magic.

That, in my opinion, is the rock on which the second act of *Götterdämmerung* completely splits. The central situation undoubtedly makes an immense impression on the spectator the *first* time he witnesses it; but, as Wagner himself observes in his *Communication*, "the *same* impression is never to be derived again from a performance of the same dramatic work" (*P.* I. 326), and least of all will these 'powerful' situations re-excite it. Compare the scene between Brynhild and Siegmund, or either of those between Wotan and Brynhild, or again the new scene in this very drama between Brynhild and Waltraute —compare any one of them with her melodramatic exposure of what she imagines to be Siegfried's wilful betrayal of her, and you will see at once the difference between the Dresden and the post-Dresden Wagner. In the later work his situations, being transferred to the very inmost regions of the soul, increase their hold upon us with every worthy re-presentment: in the earlier, such as Ortrud's interruption of Elsa's progress to the Minster and this *public* denunciation of Brünnhilde's, the thrill

we felt at a first hearing is only to be revived by concentrating our whole attention on the *music* and what, in the present case, it pathetically recalls to us from the hero's and the heroine's past.—Yet this objection, strong as it is to my own mind, is less cogent than that arising from the introduction of a magic element. Refer to page 121 *antea*, and you will find *Opera and Drama* laying it down that "Things which are only to be explained through endless accommodations of the Understanding, embarrass and confound the Feeling. . . . Thus it is the dramatic poet's task to make an action so intelligible through its emotional necessity, that we may dispense altogether with the intellect's assistance in its vindication"; and again (122-3 *ant.*), "the highest conceivable" task for the poet is to "mould Myth anew to *the world-views of an ever-present Life*, and bring it in Drama to a show the most *intelligible*." Now, to account for the hero's predicament in this scene, to alleviate the pitiful figure he cuts in this act, we have to do our intellect the violence of attempting to digest, not one, but *two* magic formulæ —the potion and the tarnhelm, and that in conjunction with an implied misinterpretation by Brünnhilde of the occasion to which Siegfried's statements refer! When Alberich used the Tarnhelm in *Das Rheingold*, it was a simple process, and we willingly became a party to the passing trick. Similarly, when Siegfried was given the potion in act i of this final drama, and again when he made use of the tarnhelm there, we might accept the sudden change in childlike faith. But when it comes to a presentment of the complications ensuing from their interaction, the warmest admirer of Wagner's poetic genius is bound to feel a qualm, to regret that such metamorphic subtleties, however justified by legendary sources, had not been resigned to a Scribe.

I am fully aware that there are those who would have us regard both, or at least one of these magical operations as symbolic. Theirs is a perverted ingenuity, a confusion of Gutrune's magic draught with the philtre shared by Tristan and Isolde. Were the potion in *Götterdämmerung* a symbol of man's mutability in affairs of the heart, Siegfried would be robbed of our last shred of sympathy. As it is, we have seen him make away as keepsake the ring which the woodbird had told him would confer on him the lordship of the world "if he knew but to rede it"; we have heard of his instruction by

Brünnhilde in her "holy runes," and listened to his confession that they had left him ignorant as before; we have seen her speed him to "new deeds," but never a *deed* have we heard talk of in the indefinite period that has since elapsed:—to make him lightly fling his wife aside, nay, barter her with open eyes, would be to react on our interest even in the hero of *Young* Siegfried. No: Wagner never meant that draught as symbol. The alterations in the scene where it is drunk, though small when measured by the line, are all directed to emphasising the suddenness of the revolution it effects in Siegfried's nature; and at the original Bayreuth rehearsals the author explicitly said that "one is to suppose Siegfried to have imbibed a poison that set him in a kind of magic fever, the first effect of which was to assert itself with quite tremendous force" (*B. Bl.* 1896, p. 334).—

Ah! Why was this second act itself not "entirely recast," like that "scene of Brünhilde with the Valkyries"? With two such sterling Wagnerian scenes in it as those in which Hagen is the principal, why not have moulded the situations for Siegfried and Brynhild quite anew? Why not have departed from the baffling legends still more boldly? How—is another question, that would need a Wagner himself to answer. We have just heard him speak of his "clearness of vision when a sufficiently fine incentive has set him in a state of exaltation": those overstrung nerves of his then rendered splendid service; but in the times of "ordinary calm," as requisite for a long deliberate revision (cf. 145 *ant.*), the aching head may have missed not only this, but various minor points as well. And thus his *Götterdämmerung*, while embracing some of the very finest scenes in the whole tetralogy, with a final act that dwarfs all other dramas; this *Götterdämmerung* steeped in music such as none else but a Beethoven could have conceived, a Berlioz instrumented,—remains a monument of dramatic inequality owing to the attempt to pour new wine into an older skin, the wine-skin of *Siegfried's Death:* an attempt its author had but recently condemned in others (336 and 360 *ant.*).

I hear anathemas hurtling through the air; so let me hurry to, and through, the scenes where this 52 remoulding is no longer a mere revision, but a "*new* creation"; the scenes where that "clearness of vision has a sufficiently fine incentive."

With the younger *Siegfried* it had been a case of excising "half-epic recital," or of converting it into psychologic action. With *Siegfried's Tod*, so full of outward action already, it rather is a case of adding what at first may seem "half-epic" interludes, but in reality have the profoundest effect on the scope of the drama; and nothing could be more flagrant vandalism than the common practice, at ordinary theatres, of omitting the first two of those three scenes which the author now entirely recast. If you drop the scenes of the Norns and Waltraute, why not restore the *Tod* to its 1848 integrity, giving us operatic choruses in all three acts, and a final tableau with Brünhilde bearing Siegfried on the back of Grane through the clouds to Walhall? That would be both logical and consistent, and no doubt a hack-composer could be found to wind the thing up with a "march from *Norma*" (370 *ant.*). A more serious suggestion: if the audience absolutely refuses to endure a first act lasting nearly two hours, why not retain the two scenes in it that justify the drama's new title, and omit the one whose dialogue flies in its face? I scarcely dare name outright which scene I mean, since its music rises to a height unscaled even by its analogue in *Siegfried*. But to 'cut' the Norns' and the Waltraute scenes—which not only weave a supramundane web around the drama, but initiate us into the secret of Wotan's last desire—is to turn the heroine into an incendiary of the blackest ingratitude: she then sets fire to a Walhall that had answered her prayer for vengeance, a Walhall waiting for herself to convert its gloom into rejoicing.

Of the beauty of those two new scenes, simply as works of poetry, it is impossible to give the English reader an approximate idea, however careful the translation. Here, and in the new lines given to the dying Siegfried, the poet of *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre* has reached his apogee. Those nerves of his must have thrilled to some purpose, when he could create so sublime a vision as that which Waltraute begins with "Seit er von dir geschieden." We forget the boards we are regarding; we lose from sight the two female figures thereon; the heavens open to the inner eye, and it sees the awful majesty of a resigned and sorrowing god. Scarcely has the picture stamped itself upon our brain, than we hear that god's best-loved but banished daughter trampling under foot his last hope of a world's redemption. After that scene, the retribution of its immediate successor no longer

comes as a brutal violence on Siegfried-Gunther's part, but as the nemesis that dogs the footsteps of a crime; for Brynhild has flung away the very thing she strove to guard, the highest power of "love." And it is that new scene which alone can justify her immolation at the drama's close, that scene which "concentrates and strengthens the root-motives of a strengthened and concentrated action" (139-40 *ant.*): the whole world of gods and mortals, thus proved loveless, must pass away, yield place to a new where a Love shall reign that blesses in Woe as well as Weal.

That, as near as may be, was the optimist-pessimism the poet couched in a moral tag with the wording whereof his sense of fitness could never agree, because it never can be framed in reasoned words, and which he therefore left at last for music alone to convey. But the dying Siegfried, poor impetuous Siegfried whom I have treated at times with scant ceremony; that Siegfried who had forgotten all the "wisdom" ever taught him—had stumbled on the secret of all time: "Der Wecker kam; er küsst dich wach. . . . Ach, dieses Auge, ewig nun offen! . . . Süsses Vergehen—seliges Grauen." And just before her moralising (happily omitted ere the work was crowned) Brünnhilde had found it also; had found it when she sped his ravens to Wotan with the message so tragically yearned for, "Ruhe! Ruhe, du Gott!"

The date of actual completion of the *Ring* poem is shrouded in the same obscurity as all its latter stages. The nearest record we have, is an allusion in a letter of December 23, to be quoted immediately. But the work must have ended quite a week before that, for the autograph "Remarks on performing the *Flying Dutchman*" are dated Dec. 22, and a few days must surely be allowed for shifting the mental focus.

About the middle of December 1852, accordingly, was finished that revision of *Siegfried's Tod* which commenced toward the end of November. Three working weeks, at the most; at the rate of two to three hours a day, from 40 to 50 hours in all; expended on a poem that originally had taken barely over a fortnight (see vol. ii, 279). Need we be astonished if a few inconsistencies are to be detected in the dialogue? True, *Die Walküre* itself had taken no more than a month; but there is a great difference

between the rapidity at which purely creative work may safely progress, and that which marks the danger-point for remanipulation. Moreover, the *Walküre* poem had been directly preceded by a preliminary draft, which, to judge by analogy, would already contain a fairly full rough outline of the dialogue. The *Rheingold* poem, on the other hand, had progressed much more slowly, with many an interruption, but perfect unity of style. The "two Siegfrieds" alone exhibit signs of over-haste.

By a singular predestination, however, the rapidity of the *musical* composition ultimately bore an inverse ratio to that of the poetic. And thus a complete balance was hereafter established; so that each main section of the rendered *Ring* has its own peculiar merit, whilst all four are knit into a perfect whole by that marvellous meshwork of musical themes which supplements the poet's words at every turn.

December 23, '52: "Dear good friend, see that you recover your strength right soon! When you feel blithe and brisk again, you shall rejoice yourself with *my* Siegfried too,* since that is finished. For myself, I now am fairly well. But you?—Let me be sent a speedy answer to that question; otherwise I cannot tell if I'm not harming you with every line I make you read."

Excepting half-a-dozen business lines next day, that was the last message of Wagner's that can ever have reached good Uhlig. The poor fellow was neither to read nor hear the consummation of a poem in which he had taken a keener interest than any other of his master's friends for full four years; a drama for which he hitherto had constituted, in the poet's eyes, the ideal audience. It needed nothing to complete the tragedy of the *Ring des Nibelungen*, beyond this shattering blow that now befell its author. In all seriousness, and relying on the reader's sympathy, I can but see a mystic link between this sorrow, that prostrated Wagner in the very act of fair-copying the "poem of his life," and that

* In distinction from the "our" of a previous letter, Dec. 6: "Hearty greetings to wife and children, and our Siegfried in particular," the little son to whom Wagner had recently stood godfather by proxy, and whose health had caused him such anxiety last May.—Owing partly to the writer's own preoccupation, partly to the compulsory silence of his correspondent, there had been no letter between the 6th and 23rd December; thus depriving us of the date required above.

which overtook him when fair-copying the last pages of his greatest prose-work. But *this* loss was not confined to Wagner: what *we* have lost by Uhlig's death, is wellnigh incalculable. Look back through this volume, and you will find his name recurring only less frequently than that of the hero himself; for we owe to the *Letters to Uhlig* such an insight into Wagner's life, his thoughts, his feelings and his art, as not even the *Correspondence with Liszt* could replace. These letters are virtually the man's, the thinker's, and the artist's, diary; and fuller and more exhaustive has it grown as the months passed by, so that the letters of the latest twelvemonth cover quite as much space as those of the whole three preceding it. If Liszt was Wagner's "alter ego" on the artistic side (with reservations), Uhlig was the pre-elect recipient of his inmost thought, and to him may be applied the "Mit mir nur rath' ich, red' ich zu dir," of Wotan to Brünnhilde. "This loss is irreparable for the whole of my life; I behold myself robbed of the half of my own soul," Wagner cries when the blow falls.* And at the end of two months it still is like some horrible nightmare, from which he hopes to wake and find his friend about to visit him that summer: "To whom am I now to impart all that for which I knew such sure response within the bosom of my friend?"

Denn mir allein erdünkte Wagner's *Gedanke;*
den ich nicht dachte, sondern nur fühlte;
für den ich focht, kämpfte und stritt. (cf. *Siegfried* act iii).

A brief sketch of Uhlig's history down to 1851 was given in a former chapter (pp. 163 *et seq*). At the end of that year he was promoted to the post of "Vorspieler," or leader of the Dresden orchestra for singspiels and entr'acte music. The new appointment (on which Wagner congratulates him in Letter 54) made him in one respect more of a master, in another, more of a slave —a slave to "duty." So much so, that Wagner has to entreat him in October 52: "Get a doctor's certificate, and have your contract altered so as to secure you regular leave of absence

* Herr Glasenapp does not name the exact source of this quotation, or of the matter of the sentence that follows it; nor do they occur in any of Wagner's *published* letters. I prefer, however, not to importune him with a prying question, but rather to rely on a guess of my own: namely, that these passages were originally addressed to that noble, sympathetic friend of both, Frau Ritter.—W. A. E.

every summer for a couple of months (at the least). If this is refused you, or they want to pare away that minimum, give up your present post entirely—in which you have the very smallest chance of getting away—and revert to an ordinary fiddler, but with the mental reservation that you'll take things as lightly as others have done (Kummer, for instance); i.e. when you find fiddling too much for your strength, or your disgust at it exceeds your patience, then play truant for weeks or months on end, just because you can't endure it any longer. . . . I implore you, give up your *present* position if you cannot make it quite suit your convenience; and that you'll never do with *it*. Then take your whole duties easy, even should your idling end in their pensioning you off. That is your only possibility of self-preservation: otherwise, to all appearance, you'll soon be done for. . . . By all the powers that be, throw over this abject sense of *duty:* be *ill-behaved*—'tis the only thing to save you. . . . Take care of yourself! *So long as this hoarseness lasts, abjure all* service: I pledge you to it, if you have any love at all for me. Do it to please me: take a complete holiday till your throat is *entirely* well! I know what finished one of my dearest friends in Paris, Lehrs, of former days: the poor devil was suffering from a similar complaint, but found it impossible to give up work and worry; if he could but have taken a pleasant rest, he might easily have been cured. Do what I bid you! I shall never write you again, if you cannot inform me in your next that you have said goodbye to *all service* for the present, no matter what betides!!—Give ear to me!!"—Involuntarily I ask, have there been *many* great men in this world who exhibited such deep solicitude for the welfare of a humble friend, as did this "egoist"?

Shortly after that letter, another underlines the warning: "Just two words after my work-time [ending *Rheingold*]! *Your health.* I'm glad I frightened you; that was the very thing I wanted to" (Nov. 1). The warning came too late.

Not that it had not been sounded before. Last May, in fact: "I'm always fearing lest you most excellent youth should depart from me—certainly not in spirit, but in body! What a wretched lot is yours, and how much it means, to bear it as you do!" Uhlig apparently had laughed his friend's fears away thereafter; but in August they begin to be confirmed: "Many thanks for your letter, and its good spirits in spite of your indisposition!

What's up with you, you waterman, that you suddenly ail?" The question contains its own answer; and the letter ends with the first of Wagner's many entreaties that Uhlig shall see betimes to getting leave of absence, for next summer: "the rest I hope you'll let be *my* care"—for the master was hoping to be able to treat his friend to the holiday expenses out of *Tannhäuser* returns.

More than that. He was ready to share the burden of supporting Uhlig, and *his wife and children*, when the serious nature of the malady at last declared itself, as we read in two separate messages. First in the long October letter: "I must tell you at once that your reports on your condition have given me no true comfort."—With the sanguineness characteristic of an advanced stage of consumption, Uhlig had evidently made too light of that terrible sign, the throat complaint; but Wagner, with his experience of poor Lehrs, is not to be deceived.—"Believe me, dearest friend, you're fagging yourself too much: with your highly delicate constitution, you ought to lead a quite different life; you are 'serving' yourself to death. My strongest proof of what you need, is the fact of your having benefited so much by your Swiss trip of last year, with its due amount of dawdling. From that you may see what does you good! Your unimpassioned nature saves you from convulsive catastrophes such as occur to me at times; but, in revenge, you chronically pine away. . . . How I long for great practical successes, to be able to help you to what you cannot afford from your own means alone! . . . But every summer you must take a quarter's leave; and when they begin to kick at that, you must get yourself pensioned, and come to me with bag and baggage; *together*, with all your family, we'll manage somehow."

The proposal of a definite migration we met over two years back (p. 48 *ant.*): it is repeated within a month from the above. 'Reflect, dearest friend, that you have your health, your life, entirely in your own hands. Fling aside *every* consideration that might prevent your leading the life you need. Above all—I conjure you—take a *quarter-of-a-year's* leave next summer, and spend that time with me: (Franz is coming too!). Simply get the doctor to certify that you require it: he can't possibly decline, and it will be impossible for leave to be refused you then. I have to concur with your unwillingness to *exchange* your official position, but can advise you to *retain* it only on condition that

you keep your official conscience within bounds, and thoroughly make up your mind to take things easy. Should the worst come to the worst, however—depend on me; I mean, on my future in the way of successes. I may rely with tolerable certainty on good receipts in course of the next few years; for necessaries, as you know, I am secured; and for 'luxuries,' I beg and pray you to consider yourself a partaker in advance. It would be idiotic of me, to begin to boast; but you surely must see that even already, so soon as I was (*war*) pre-acquainted with your exact situation, I could assist you right well. So, you should take that possibility also into the reckoning, in your plans for future maintenance! And now—enough of that!" (Nov. 10).

As Wagner was not a man to dwell on any act of kindness in which he had indulged, I am inclined to take that "*war*" (where we might have expected a "*wäre*") as a sign that he already had sent assistance from his ill-lined purse. However that may be, the offer of hospitality is perpetually reiterated, and as constantly connected with the aspiration for a cosy country-house (434 *ant.*). Not a month before the young man's death, his senior writes him: "Keep of good cheer till next summer; if only I have you here once more, we'll soon pull you round again.'

Consumptive patients scarcely ever realise how near is their end, and Uhlig was no exception; for Wagner's warning letter of Oct. 11-12 is followed in two days by another, where he says: "I'm very glad to hear that your hoarseness has left you; but my last orders hold good as to service." A fortnight later: "Take *cacoigna* for breakfast, cocoa purified of all fat: I do—hardly any tax on the digestion, and most nourishing.*—At the end of the week I'll dilate." Nov. 10, in fact, goes off that letter which not only announces the completion of *Rheingold*, and offers Uhlig material assistance, but constitutes a tiny essay on health and diet. It is from one invalid to another, and having already quoted the part concerning the writer (416 *ant.*), I will supplement it with that which describes and prescribes for the addressee: "Now look at yourself. Your long thin body † ought

* As an exchange of recommendations, we find the writer ambitious to obtain a seltzogene such as Uhlig has procured himself, and finally glorying in the proud possession of "a machine with new improvements by *Liebig*."

† Cf. Oct. 5, "I hear that Schnorr is painting you for a Nibelungen-plate: is it true? Have you become a Hun (*Recke*)?"

o tell you that you possess but poor assimilative power; through n absurdly sedentary mode of life in youth you drove that con-itutional deficiency to the pitch that is troubling you now. Attack your malady at the right end, and, with a fair amount of nergy, it will be easy for you—easier than for me (because of our colder temperament)—to compel your life to last as long s you will. . . . It is natural that your throat should suffer nost, with your general malnutrition; for the throat is the veakest, most delicate organ of them all. You lack (here Herwegh speaks) sufficient fat-formation, and ought to take verything that will help toward that, even *cod-liver-oil*, which s said to have worked wonders in similar cases."

A deceptive change for the better appears to have occurred in he early part of November, for Wagner adds a postscript to the etter just cited: "Your reports on your health are welcome, and velcome as only they can be." Most characteristic of his ttitude towards his friend are the last words of this postscript: 'Your vouchers, best of men, will remain uninspected!"—referring to a sentence of nine days previously, "For God's sake spare me the threatened *receipts* for your disbursements: you pedant, what shall I hear next?" With which I will link a slightly earlier remark, as it is just these small things that tell us most: "Reassure your mind as to my momentary financial pinch; but you are squandering fortunes on postage. What has your wife to say to it?" Though the difference in their relative positions in the world was immense, from what aspect soever, there is not one taint of patronising in any portion of this correspondence: to Liszt himself Wagner never wrote with more entire freedom from superiority; to Liszt, indeed, he could not often bare his heart so unreservedly. "Dein Dich liebender *Ami*," and "Stets Dein Dich innig schätzender und hoch verehrender Ami," are forms of signature that suddenly crop up in the latest phase, as if the writer found the German "Freund" inadequate to express his affection; and from of old we have read the profusest apologies for a passing display of short temper.

Can we wonder at Uhlig's devotion to such a man? On his side it was a devotion unparalleled by any of Wagner's male friends, before or after; the absolutely purest of unselfishness. We have seen how he undertook the proof-correcting of *Opera and Drama* and the *Communication* without a murmur, and without what the

world calls reward. Now that the master's operas were beginning to go the round—and beginning at the very time he needed all his brain-capacity for his *Nibelungen* poem—it was Uhlig who volunteered to relieve him of much worry by superintending the collation of the various scores; a work that could not be done at Zurich, especially as it needed someone on the spot where they were published. Endless is the correspondence relative thereto; but not even his fast-ebbing strength will induce good Uhlig to relinquish a labour of love. Mid-November Wagner writes him: "Ought I, in view of your ailing health, to saddle you with such commissions any longer? Be frank!" Four weeks before the end: "I cannot suffer you to be harassed now with my affairs in any way, and therefore beg you to transfer the whole theatre-score business to old *Fischer*." But Uhlig is not to be deterred, and Wagner's very last letter to him is a request to get two copies of the *Dutchman* score set right for Breslau and Schwerin; a request, inevitable in all the circumstances,* for which he thus apologises: "Ascribe it to the stubbornness of your friendship, if I plague you once again to-day. . . See, poor chap, what you've brought on yourself!!!!" (Dec. 24, 52).

The last few weeks were an agony for the poet of the *Ring;* an agony of suspense, best described in his own most touching words. Dec. 6: "You may see from the accompanying [the letter's first sheet, dated *nine* days earlier] how I have been waiting day after day for a letter from you. At last it became a horrible torture—for I naturally had to attribute it all to an aggravation of your illness. Unspeakable was my delight at receiving a letter with your superscription to-day; but how its contents have depressed me! Poor friend, you feel so ill, and there is nothing I can do at all to help you, nothing to relieve you! It must cost you great exertion even to write me: is there no one about you, who would send me news of your condition oftener? I have already prayed Frau Ritter to." Then follows the adjuration to give the whole score traffic up to Fischer, in lieu whereof I will refer back to mid-September: "I could write you yard-long letters every day, there's such a terrible amount of matter for communion." Bear that in mind, also that by Decem-

* The day before, he had said: "I conjure you, if these commissions are of the smallest harm to you, hand *everything* at once to old Fischer" (Dec. 23).

er the writer has reached the last round of his *Ring* poem, efore you proceed—"For the moment I can think of literally othing else suitable to write to you, however much I always ong to chat with you. My heartfelt sympathy with your suffer-ngs makes everthing besides appear to me by far too insigni-cant. Ah, were I only with you, to see, to help, or at the least o liven you! . . . Ah God! the more I write you, the more I eel how needful it is first to know more about your state! All now can do, is to bid you keep your heart up till next ummer," etc.

Again no news comes, and whoever wishes for the key to Vagner's power as poet of the human heart, will find it in the etter of December 23: "You cause me terrible anxiety, especially s I hear news of you so seldom. Frau Ritter—whom I heartily nank for it—wrote me about a fortnight ago, fairly quietingly. What I would have given, not to have had to wait so long again! Above all, I am in complete ignorance as to *whether* and *what* may write you. That you are fearfully weak now, is only too lain: but does this weakness simply forbid your corresponding, r does it overtax you if your mind is disturbed in any way by orrespondence received from others? *This* is what I am so ncertain about, and what makes any more extensive communi-ation from me to you seem almost a crime in your present ondition; so that I am always checking myself when I would ommence a letter, and rather wait for news of you again. On his point in particular then (namely, whether the excitement of ommunications from without—whether letters in general are urtful to you?) let me be placed in certainty by some third erson, perhaps your good wife or Dr Schulze—if you yourself eel too weak still."

It was very near the end now. The insomnia, that had seized n Uhlig for two months and more, had been combated awhile vith opium and strong wine—poor "waterman"! When these o longer had effect, Death pitifully gave him its own sleep. At even in the evening of the 3rd of January 1853 he passed away, vith his one-and-thirtieth year left incomplete.

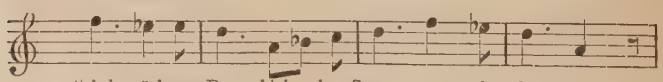
Aechter als er schwur keiner Eide;
treuer als er hielt keiner Verträge;
lautr'er als er liebte kein andr'er (GTDG, close).

On the 2nd Wagner had written Fischer: "You know of Uhlig's illness, and may imagine how it pains me to trouble him with commissions now. . . . Be so good, then, as to see to the Holländer scores for me. Of *Uhlig* I now can ask nothing." By the 8th that "cannot" has been inexorably verified: "Under the affliction of the news of Uhlig's death, I can write you no further to-day than what I am compelled to by business considerations."

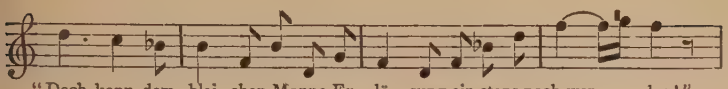
His grief is too deep to vent itself in words just yet, for his letter of the same date to Liszt has incidentally to mention Uhlig, but does not even say "the late." Liszt answers on the 12th, with a parenthetic "Uhlig's death has most painfully affected Hans and me"; but Wagner, though he writes again on the 13th, cannot trust himself to breathe the name to Liszt till a month has passed—a silence far more eloquent than words. When Lehrs had died, Wagner had written his German comrades left behind in Paris: "My head, my whole being, was palsied for a whole week after receipt of this news; it lay like an incubus upon me, so that I could scarcely raise my brow. . . When I think how I looked on, and had to look on, at this poor brave friend being slowly murdered under my eyes by that fate which dogs all that is noble and unassuming!" (July 13, 43).

At last he unburdens his heart to Liszt, February 11, 53. With an extract from that letter, which once more sets the *Ring* and *Holländer* in harmony, I will close the present volume:—

"How long I can hold out in this terrible joylessness—I know not! The middle of last month I came nigh to succumbing—and already thought I should soon have to—follow my—poor **Uhlig.** I was induced to call a doctor in; a most attentive conscientious man [Rahn-Escher], he is treating me with all diligence. He comes almost every day, and I can but approve his orders. Thus much is certain: it won't be *his* fault, if I—do not recover. I stand in a desert; all my intercourse has perished from me; I have had to outlive all. . . . That mournful hero the 'flying Dutchman,' is never out of my head now! I'm always hearing



but the time is past for



"For me there's no redemption more, save—*death!* O happiness, were it to strike me in a storm at sea,—and not upon a sickbed!!! Yes—in Walhall's burning would I pass away!—Pay good heed to my new poem—it comprises the world's beginning and end! . . .

"Adieu, my Franciscus,—you only one that looms before me like a giant-heart! Untiring one, farewell. And when you have the ballad played tomorrow [i.e. 16th] think of me! Here shall I be sitting lone on the couch, staring at the lamp, and brooding on my—great—good fortune, to have won *you* indeed from this wretched world! Ay, ay! 'tis that—which bears me up!"

APPENDIX.

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES.

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Wagner's flight (*p.* 469).—*Berlioz' note on Wagner* (470).—*Wagner pleads the cause of Semper* (472).—*Dingelstedt on Lohengrin* (475).—*Heinrich Heine* (477).—*Uhlig and the Communication* (478).—*Princess Wittgenstein as scholar* (482).—*Robert Franz on Lohengrin* (483).—*Liszt on Lohengrin in the Débats* (488).—*Wagner's addition to the Lohengrin-analysis* (490).—*From Lohengrin to Young Siegfried: a letter to Stahr* (491).—*Roeckel attempts to escape from prison* (496).—*Swiss newspapers and the Flying Dutchman* (499).—*Dedication of Lohengrin* (500).—*The King of Saxony and the Tannhäuser-revival* (501).—*Contemplated Guide to Lohengrin* (504).

Page 3. WAGNER'S FLIGHT.—To the account supplied in volume ii I have to add two or three details recently brought to light in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* (Feb. 13, 1902) by Dr Hans Merian-Genast, a grandson on his mother's side of the Weimar stage-manager to whom frequent allusion has been made in earlier pages, Eduard Genast. As the result of this writer's local inquiries, it would appear that Wagner's interview with the Grand Duchess Maria Paulowna did not take place in Weimar, but at the Wartburg. According to court-archives, Maria Paulowna repaired on the 16th of May to the grand-ducal residence at Eisenach, and stayed there a few days; Wagner also, as we know, went to Eisenach for two or three days, returning to Weimar on the 18th; at Eisenach the restrictions of court-etiquette would be less rigid than in the capital: we thus obtain another reason for the fugitive's excursion.—On the evening of the 18th, Eduard Genast took Wagner to his own house (to pass the night?) for greater security than could be offered by a hotel. The daughters of E. Genast distinctly remember their father confiding his guest to their entertainment, while Genast "repeatedly left the house in the utmost excitement." The object of Genast's errands was plainly the ensuring of Wagner's safety. Among other people, he would seem to have approached State-minister von Watzdorf that night with an inquiry as to his contingent attitude towards a refugee from Dresden; to which Watzdorf replied: "I should have him arrested as soon as the warrant arrived; and if such a man should happen to be on Weimar soil, you had better advise him to quit it as quickly as possible." Genast's hurried endeavours in other directions proving equally futile, it was decided that Wagner should proceed to

Magdala next morning, as related in vol. ii, and wait there till a pass could be borrowed for him.—The same evening presumably dates Liszt's message to the Altenburg: "Can you hand to bearer 60 thalers? Wagner is obliged to fly, and I am unable to assist him for the moment. Goodnight!" (see Liszt's published letters to Princess Wittgenstein).—Finally, we are given the name of another instrument in Wagner's escape. All sorts of ridiculous legends are demolished by a combination of Wernsdorf's authentic account (vol. ii, 370) with the testimony of the Weimar court-organist Gottschalg, namely that he saw Wagner on the morning of the 19th pursuing the road towards Magdala in a one-horse carriage driven by the democratic flyman Gröschner.—The services of all accessories to Wagner's flight demand a record; for, had he been arrested and flung into Waldheim, we certainly should have had no Walhall—no *Ring*, no *Tristan*, no *Meistersinger*, no *Parsifal:* it would have been the death of a man with his high-strung nervous system.—W. A. E.

Page 5. BERLIOZ' NOTE ON WAGNER.—Liszt's article on "Le Tannhæuser" in the *Journal des Débats* of May 18, 1849, is prefaced thus:—

"N.B. Richard Wagner, whose latest work forms the subject of the following analysis, shares with Reissiger the functions of Kapellmeister to the King of Saxony. He is at once a distinguished poet and composer, and moreover an expert conductor. Since he has been at the head of the Dresden royal Kapelle he has written three grand operas: 1° the *Flying Dutchman;* 2° *Rienzi;* and finally 3° *Tannhæuser*, of which latter M. Liszt here makes so fine a eulogy. Richard Wagner resided long in Paris, where he led an existence of hardship and obscurity; he then wrote various articles of musical criticism, in the French language, remarkable as much for their style as for their thought; but, tired with struggling with obstacle after obstacle, and renouncing the idea of acquainting the French with his capabilities, he at last decided to return to Saxony, his native land. The means to make this journey had just been furnished him by M. Léon Pillet, then Director of the Opéra, who, having had in his hands the draft for the libretto of the *Flying Dutchman*, bought it of Richard Wagner and had it set to music by M. Dietsch.

"Fortunately the King of Saxony, recognising at once the great talents of this young poet-composer, soon gave him the opportunity of developing them, by placing him at the side of Reissiger, in the brilliant position he occupies to-day.

"H. B."

It is unnecessary to point out the inaccuracies in this little obituary notice—unwittingly obituary; they only stamp the paragraph the more emphatically as the work of Hector Berlioz. A pleasant little

memento, but rather to be regarded as a compliment to Liszt, than anything else ; for Berlioz shewed no cordiality to Wagner when he arrived in Paris after having lost his "brilliant position."

Liszt's own article, mainly an account of the opera's story, is practically the same as the first chapter of the *Tannhäuser* portion of the *Lohengrin et Tannhäuser* brochure (cf. *F. Liszt's Ges. Schr.* III. ii., pp. 3 to 14), save for the following peroration, omitted from the book :—

"Je viens de vous entretenir d'un des plus beaux chefs d'œuvre qu'artiste ait réalisé, longuement, sans hâte ni presse, comme si à l'heure qu'il est aucun autre succès ne nous détournait de l'admiration des choses d'art et de poésie, persuadé qu'elles gardent toujours leur importance. Ceux pour qui la poésie de la vie en est la plus vraie réalité, comprennent que ces types suprêmes du sentiment marquent aussi dans l'histoire du développement de la pensée humaine. Plus la beauté de ces conceptions est parfaite, plus elle rend l'idéal accessible à la généralité, plus elle élève le niveau des esprits, et plus elle augmente le nombre des âmes éprises de cet idéal.

" C'est avec une grande habileté que Wagner a su garder la délicate ligne que peut suivre la poésie entre la fiction et le mythe, donnant assez de vie à ses personnages pour les dramatiser, et laissant flotter assez de vague sur leurs contours pour que chaque intelligence compréhensive y puisse dessiner ses propres traits.

" Le plan réunit, aussi bien que la partition, une rare entente des moyens pratiques de l'art, une admirable distribution des effets, avec une grande abondance d'idées et de style.

" Lorsqu'elle sera plus connue, on disséquera le squelette de cette belle œuvre : on se disputera même sur telle de ses articulations et telle de ses proportions. A quoi servirait maintenant d'entrer dans les détails de cette merveilleuse instrumentation, d'analyser le savant et harmonieux emploi des violons, des flûtes, des harpes, des trombonnes, etc., etc., et d'énumérer les tons divers, si heureusement appliqués aux divers momens du drame? Encore une fois ; les grands théatres d'Allemagne ne sauraient tarder à faire toute sa place au Tannhæuser sur leurs répertoires et dans l'opinion du public. Espérons aussi que le Conservatoire de Paris s'appropriera bientôt l'ouverture gigantesque qui résume tant de magnificence, tant d'extraordinaires beautés."—This is succeeded by a brief description of the overture, identical with the first account thereof in Chapter II. of the *Tannhäuser* part of the brochure, ending with the words "hymne triomphant" ; immediately after which we have the simple signature "Liszt."

In the present instance I have thought that the original French, in which there is very little to suggest a collaborator, would prove of greater interest than an inevitably bald translation ; but attention

should be called to Liszt's recommendation of the overture as a work which the Paris Conservatoire would do well to perform.—W. A. E.

Pages 35 and 149. WAGNER PLEADS THE CAUSE OF SEMPER.—In the Zurich Allgemeine Musik-Gesellschaft's *Neujahrsblatt* for 1901—a publication to which I am indebted for many a valuable particular of Wagner's Zurich period—Herr A. Steiner has for the first time given to the world one of the master's numerous letters to his devoted Swiss friend Jakob Sulzer. Notwithstanding that the acquaintanceship was barely nine months old at the date of this letter, the recipient is already addressed throughout with "Du"—a sign of intimacy not reproduceable in an English translation :—

"Paris, 22nd February 1850 (59, rue de Provence).

"Hearty thanks for your letter, which has reassured myself so much, that I have no doubt you will have also succeeded in relieving my wife of her anxiety. I may trust, moreover, that you entertain no apprehension lest your present conflicts with the German Powers might result in actual obstacles to a return I already am longing for, or to the continuance of my sojourn among you in Switzerland? Presumably I could scarcely be classed with those whose extradition would be seriously demanded of you.* Besides, according to repeated rumours that have come to my ear again of late, I nurse the hope that my character of fugitive may perhaps be shortly removed altogether. Though I certainly should not accept a summons to Dresden in my former capacity—just because it could simply be my former capacity—yet it would be an agreeable result to be enabled to stay free and unhindered wherever I liked, eh! and bring an occasional visit to the German theatres into my reckoning again.

"And now let me ask your counsel for a friend. *Semper*, the celebrated architect, builder of the Dresden theatre and new museum, and, like myself, a refugee, wishes also to be able to settle in Switzerland. Offers made him from England he declines, as they would place him in a dependent position. In America he might easily find employment, but will not go there, partly on account of his wife. Last summer he was offered an—unpaid post in Berne, as *Doctor legens;*

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* In explanation of these opening sentences I may quote from Wagner's letter of two days later to Uhlig (Feb. 24), at the same time reminding the reader that Sulzer, as Town Clerk, was a man of great influence in such a predicament: "As to my new domicile in Switzerland there is no cause for worry. In the eyes of the Swiss authorities I am not a refugee; my extradition would consequently have to be expressly demanded by the Holy Alliance; in which case I could promptly be protected by naturalisation" (*Bürgerrecht*). —W. A. E.

with no prospect of employment as architect, that offer naturally did not suit him. Now I have roused him to a fresh desire for Switzerland, and Zurich in particular. To secure a man of his experience and talent, certainly ought not to be a matter of indifference to Zurich! It would immensely rejoice me, to attach so excellent a man and artist to you people and myself. Would it be possible to procure him a berth at the university (he was a teaching professor at Dresden before), with a salary—however small at first—and do you know the lay of the land sufficiently to give him any prospect of appointment? As you see, this is merely a question; I don't remember having asked you it with respect to Semper before; and, as you usually are so good at advice, and know all the ins and outs, I feel it my duty to put you this question for sake of a capital good friend, and of Zurich itself. Your answer would greatly oblige and delight me.

"As for here, I haven't much to write you: I am dragging very melancholy on. Inaccuracy of information, and subsequent delays, place me in the position of having come to Paris at least four weeks too soon. You may imagine my annoyance and low spirits, unfortunately increased by constant bodily ill-health. I'm heartily sick of Paris, which goes against my entire nature, once for all: maybe the conflict of my inner dislike with the expectations of a portion of my friends, and my good wife in particular, had long been leading to my present illness through mental rebellion against constraint. O you people! Why will you not see that there is no other satisfying or beneficent activity, in consequence no useful one at all, save that which answers to our whole true being? For Paris, everything is lash and load to me. Belloni does not arrive for some days yet; so here I sit, and fume at having to sit here!—Enough about this misery!

"Please tell my wife that I am longing for a letter from her, if possible a cheery one. It is to be hoped she is well, as I wish her with all my heart. Farewell, and my thanks for your friendship.—Your R. W."

As Zurich did not jump just yet at the suggestion, Semper went to London, and the next we hear of him is an announcement, inserted through Wagner's instrumentality, in the Zurich *Eidgenössische Zeitung* of March 28, 1851:—

"*German Studio for Architects and Engineers in London.*

"The undersigned, for 14 years Director of the School of Building at the Dresden Academy of Fine Arts, and now established in London as practical architect and engineer, has the intention of receiving into his studio on very favourable terms, to include board and lodging, a number of young architects and technical students desirous of completing their theoretic and practical training. He will personally

undertake the architectonic tuition and a portion of the scientific lectures, to be conducted according to a special programme; in the engineering department he will be assisted by a skilful and experienced engineer.—The practical sense of the English is nowhere more brilliantly displayed than in their vast arrangements for the public well-being, and the technique with which they carry them out; so that in this respect they are masters to all other nations. Even their private establishments, especially their country-houses, invite to closer study alike from the technical and the artistic point of view, since they unite abundance of ideas and comfort with great simplicity of means and sterling Germanic originality; and it certainly has been an error to leave them wellnigh disregarded in favour of influences far more alien to us.

"Moreover London, through its art-collections and scientific institutes, forms an important centre for the study of our art—an art in which the beautiful should graft itself on the convenient; and situated midway between the wealth of Belgium and France in monuments of lovely architecture and the engineering triumphs scattered all over England, it invites to easy brief excursions, which the undersigned proposes to make with his pupils at regular intervals.

"Any of my young art-comrades who may be inclined to support my undertaking, can have further particulars on application to the following address:—

"Professor Semper. 27 University Street, London.

GOTTFRIED SEMPER."

To this Wagner added a friendly recommendation:—

"If the sense of architectural beauty was first aroused in us by study of the antique, yet our buildings constructed in imitation of the antique have never been brought into a warm relation with our life and its natural needs. When Semper returned from Greece 17 years ago, he explained the essential reasons in his celebrated treatise *Bemerkungen über vielfarbige Architektur und Skulptur bei den Alten* (Altona 1834), where he shewed in the Hellenic works of art themselves an organic derivation, in the first place, from the prime requirements of a domestic and a public life quite different from ours. Through an unmotived imitation of the antique, our modern architecture has fallen on such a dilemma that we believe we can pay toll to beauty in none but useless buildings,—such, for instance, as were erected by order of King Ludwig of Bavaria,—leaving it entirely unregarded in useful ones. In power of a sound artistic intuition, on the other hand, Semper detects in countries such as England—where both domestic and public life have the most consistently developed to a high facility from our natural needs—a fruitful soil for the development of beauteous architecture, also, on native and intelligible lines; where our natural needs have already been so abundantly satisfied, this

abundance must necessarily proceed to shape itself into a need of beauty. Whoever knows the creative genius displayed in Semper's famous structures, especially the theatre and the museum now approaching completion at Dresden; whoever has followed the intellectual career of this richly-gifted and highly-expert artist, from his studies on the ruins of Athens to his grasp of the Englishman's practical sense—must testify that young architects who have finished their theoretic studies at some school of building, and propose to advance to a practical course, could be given no more welcome opportunity than that now offered by my friend; whom I deem myself fortunate to be thus allowed to recommend most warmly to my Swiss hosts also, and about whose undertaking I shall at any time be glad to furnish more minute particulars.

"Zurich, 25 March 1851. RICHARD WAGNER."

How far the scheme was carried out, must be left to the architectural student to ascertain. In any case, Semper was not precisely prospering in London when Wagner met him there in 1855, and again urged Sulzer to secure his services. This time successfully; for Semper was engaged from that autumn to superintend the Zurich Polytechnic.—W. A. E.

Page 61. DINGELSTEDT ON LOHENGRIN.—Fifth of a series of chatty feuilletons on the Herder-Goethe festival at Weimar, Dingelstedt's three-column article in the Augsburg *Allgemeine Zeitung* of Sept. 4, 1850, has nothing but the subjoined incongruities to remark about Wagner and his *Lohengrin*:—

"To be candid, I have not made my mind up yet on Wagner, not got it quite clear about *Lohengrin*. It was the first opera of his I had heard: not even his *Rienzi*, *Tannhäuser*, *Holländer*, have found their way to our theatres, to say nothing of *Lohengrin*. Plunged in music from ½ past 6 to 11, I did not feel equal to keeping my head above water, eyes and ears open. Thus much, however, stands sure: something new, something novel, stepped before us there. It cannot be pooh-poohed, ignored; it must be thought out, pondered. Wagner breaks a path, if not for others, at anyrate for himself. Just as in his æsthetic writings, of which I had recently read 'The Art-work of the Future,' he propounds the most peculiar views and standpoints on art in general, so in his products he tries to strike peculiar lines, to reach goals beyond the ordinary. Theory and practice march hand in hand with him: in itself the proof of a determined nature. But just as in his quality of æsthete he makes for the breaking down of every form in art, and allows but one great Combined-art (*Gesammtkunst*), erects an open stage in the open (*eine freie Bühne im Freien aufbaut*), to which the arts of music, poetry and painting, the latter reduced from its independence to scene-painting, are to contribute in

inseparable co-operation—so in this opera he breaks away from every form and all tradition. The conventional structure of the dramatic tone-poem, its partition into numbers and pieces, into arias, duets, trios and so on, Wagner deliberately throws it all aside. He takes his subject as a whole; he has no text before him to set, but text and music seem with him to arise simultaneously, to grow from out each other. He makes everything himself, everything by himself, every single thing. Moreover he has the indisputable advantage of a singularly happy bent toward national subjects, the cycle of medieval legends. Tannhäuser, that seems to have made a very deep impression here in Weimar, is followed by Lohengrin now; Lohengrin ere long by Siegfried.

"When you see how Wagner hews his matter out of these hoary old folk-poems, with what power and what subtlety he conceives and handles it, you cannot withhold your frank admiration for this rare double-talent, amid your surprise at the use to which he puts it. Technical experts in both departments, poetry and music, will cry abuse; the public keep still, not knowing what to make of it. Carried away by many an admirably-introduced and effectively-treated dramatic scene, it yet is unable to follow the details, to seek and find out all the intentions, to take the whole delightedly to heart. The boundaries of art have here so overflowed into each other, its means so indistinguishably and arbitrarily mingled, that it is hard to say where the poetry ceases and the music begins. Instead of the singers, the instruments declaim and vegetate [!—cogitate?]; the flutes coo love, the fiddles wrangle, double-basses and drums fall out; in between, the brass, a trumpet, suddenly shrieks, enough to rob auditor and spectator of hearing and sight. And so it goes on without cease, till the curtain comes down. No recitative, no andante, no cabaletta, not even a duet other than a dialogue between two persons, nor any ensemble-number in the olden style; nowhere a resting-point, everywhere movement, flurry and scurry (*Hatz und Hast*), a savage force that now and then o'erleaps itself to fustian, a sweet sensibility (*süsse Empfindsamkeit*) that not rarely dozes into sugared sentimentalism (*süssliche Empfindelei*). What we have been taught by other operas to recognise as the melodic element, musical thoughts such as we can retain, appear but momentarily; the waves of harmony, the deluge of instrumentation, seize, bear away, engulf them at once. We feel as on a long sea-voyage, at the mercy of elementary powers, dæmonic nature-forces; now lifted to the sky, then hurled to the abyss, tossed by the storm, rocked by the calm; the mainland, all accustomed surroundings, left far, far behind, and before us unknown shores, undreamt-of goals.

"We leave musicians to decide if this kind of romanticism has a future before it, if Wagner will create a school or stand alone?

When we remember that it is precisely in their art that every new phenomenon has commenced with an upheaval of the old, and in freest subjectivity has struck out other paths than those already known; that the Opera of Gluck, Mozart, Beethoven, once stood as solitary and unexampled as Richard Wagner's stands to-day,—at least the possibility of great developments and influences is not to be denied in advance. Perhaps someone else will follow, to carry out what Wagner has begun; perhaps he himself will succeed in mounting to the full height of effect from some ruling centre, from Paris, and in bringing his tendency to vogue and understanding in wider circles than the scattered German stages would be able to offer him. In Liszt he has an interpreter of elective affinity"—and so on, with ¾ of a column devoted to the conductor, the performers, Weimar's past ("a city of great tombs") and future, ending as follows:—

"Shall I say whither roamed my silent thoughts, more than once, on that night of din and glamour? To the outlaw in Switzerland, so far away, yet in our midst. The commander was missing, while his troops fought to victory. A mournful picture, relieved only in the light that a German Royal family, a German theatre, a German audience, with fine unconstraint greeted the banished with warm applause. Weimar has thus fulfilled withal a wish expressed in my prologue, which had extolled it in the future as in the past as

"Sanctuary of the fugitive, temple of the hallowed,
Haven and isle amid the waters' strife!
Fr. D."

Certainly, as Wagner complained, such an article was likely to do him far more harm than good.—W. A. E.

Page 92. HEINRICH HEINE.—The verse to which I refer has always struck me as deliberately betraying the whole ballad: "Ich glaube, die Welle verschlingen am Ende Schiffer und Kahn; und das hat mit ihrem Singen die Lorelei gethan." Since these lines have certainly no poetry in them, nor even rhythm, in fact nothing but the cheapest rhyme, they cannot suffer by a prose translation: "I fancy the waves swallow skipper and boat in the end; and that's what the Loreley did with her singing." Not alone the naïve folk-legend, however, does Heine exploit in this spirit of bald insincerity. Who can have read his *Reisebilder* without experiencing a shudder whenever the sham-converted Jew makes his poses before the most sacred symbols of the Christian religion? Here the mockery is mainly unintentional; but it gives one the same sense of loathing as the trail of a slug on some beloved grave: the animal had meant no harm, but its slime was a part of its nature. See how this vaunted "German

poet" treats Death itself: "A horror sweet as once I felt when in the lonely night I pressed my lips upon Maria's lips; a woman of wondrous beauty, who at that time had no fault at all, except that she was dead" (*Reisebilder* II., xiv). The toe of one's boot is the only part of one that such a sentiment can move.

Then contrast the spirit of Sterne's *Sentimental Journey* with its copyist's vulgar hints, or more than hints, of cheap amours. Every girl whom Heine's travelling chariot passes is making eyes at *him*, he is pleased to inform us in his fulsome way; till the climax is reached in the enamouredness of Nature herself with his unique person: "Here and there I remarked a dim-blue peak that seemed raising itself on tiptoe, and inquisitively peering over the other mountains' shoulders, presumably to look at me!" (*ibid.* xii).—In a man past thirty such silly egoism is far less tolerable than in a youth of twenty-one, like Mendelssohn, whose first published letter to his parents reveals the selfsame racial malady, minus the sexual concomitants. Young Felix is travelling at his ease in an open carriage, and has "bought himself a couple of May-nosegays": the Pförtner boys troop out of school, and "envy" him; he overtakes "President G. and two ladies, in a little chaise that could scarcely carry them; they certainly envied me no less"; his horses gallop up a hill, and pass a string of loaded hacks, "who surely envied me no less, for I was truly enviable. The country looked so spring-like spruce, so bright and gay; and then the sun set so earnestly behind the hills; and then the Russian ambassador drove along so sullenly in his two great four-horsed carriages, and like a hare I passed them in my droschke." I can scarcely conceive either an English or a German youth thus gloating over his superior advantages, even in a private account of his tour; though Nature's admiration of the traveller is more subtly suggested by adolescent Mendelssohn than by adult Heine.—W. A. E.

Page 172. UHLIG AND THE COMMUNICATION. — We have no definite information as to the date when this work was begun; yet we may arrive pretty near to it. A "preface to my three Romantic opera-poems" had been foreshadowed to Liszt in November 1850, and again to both Liszt and Uhlig in February 1851; but other literary work had first to be cleared out of the way—*Opera and Drama*, *A Theatre at Zurich*, and minor articles. May 22, '51, it appears to have been still in abeyance, though gradually taking shape in its author's mind, for Liszt is told: "I reserve till later—with the publication of my opera-poems—an account of this my path of evolution." Two or three days later the *Young Siegfried* draft is commenced, and its poem usurps the whole of Wagner's time till June 24, when he sends Uhlig his final directions for the route by which he is to come

to Zurich. This would leave about ten days to a fortnight unoccupied before the guest's arrival ; an interval the most likely to be devoted to a task in which that guest was sure to take unusual interest. In any case this self-analysis was already on the stocks, but not completed, when Uhlig reached Zurich ; for he is informed on the 24th of August, "The Communication was finished soon after you left ; the part you *don't* know is really quite the most important." During Uhlig's stay the conversation, like the letters, would naturally revolve round an æsthetic-speculative centre, and we may readily imagine a general ransacking of manuscripts and notebooks : the visitor would have been very apathetic, if he expressed no curiosity as to certain literary projects that had been abandoned. Now, a letter of a year ago (No. 14) had informed good Uhlig of three such derelicts, namely "The Redemption of Genius," "The Monumental," and what we may abbreviate into "Civilisation and the Life of the Future." In the Posthumous Papers, as published, there are but the most exiguous suggestions for the groundwork of that trio ; but connected with them in both places (letter and Posthuma) we have hints of the never-executed drama of *Achilleus*,* and between two jottings for *Achilleus* the Posthuma give us the myth of Wate and the Norns. With certain amplifications, that version of the Wate myth has been bodily transplanted to the exordium of the *Communication* (*P.* I. 290), though a distinct and formal opening of personal narrative had been made four pages earlier : "Of my earliest artistic efforts I shall have but a brief report to furnish," and so on (*ibid.* 286).—That forms interpolation one. Had it been all, it would have been well. Still better, to have discarded the whole preceding matter, and started simply with this well-found allegory, leaving it precisely where it stands.

Alas ! it was not all. That "Monumental" article — portentous title for an onslaught on the "eternal canons" of art—had evidently made some little progress once, and Uhlig must have thought it a pity for good 'copy' to be wasted. Wagner, on the other hand, had had enough of essay-writing for the present ; after the *Communication* he meant to return to creative work, to compose the music for his two

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* My theory is materially supported by the *addition* of a footnote on Achilles and his horse Xanthus to the last of those sections of *Opera and Drama* which had already appeared in the *Deutsche Monatsschrift*, and as to which Wagner expresses his dissatisfaction in a letter to Liszt (July 11) written during Uhlig's visit. Those sections (Part II. caps i to v) were thoroughly revised after their appearance in the *Monatsschrift*, i.e. between the beginning of May and the end of August 1851 : at what time would the revision be more probable, than now that Wagner's literary confidant and eventual proof-corrector was under the same roof with him ? Thus a particle of the *Achilleus* also was rescued from oblivion (see *P.* II. 220).—W. A. E.

Siegfrieds. However, he had been deliberately tidying up, setting his literary house in order, preparatory to settling down: why not "make a clearance" of this unused fragment too? So we may imagine him arguing, after his guest had admired it; for into the present exordium the fragment is palpably wedged (*P.* I. pp. 274 to 282 or 283). I say palpably, not merely because of the tell-tale little dashes—which *might* be accidental—but also because of the sudden appearance and obstinate persistence of the third person singular, "the artist," in lieu of "I." More conclusively: if you will turn to that year-old letter to Uhlig in which the "Monumental" article is mooted, you will find the writer deploring the want of insight betrayed by a friendly critic in the *Monatsschrift* as regards his *Art-work of the Future*, and deploring it in the very terms employed on page 278 of the work we are dealing with. Moreover, the style and phraseology of this particular interpolation are pronouncedly those of 1849-50, not 1851, as may be seen at once upon comparing these pages with the body of the work and with its two immediate predecessors, *A Theatre at Zurich* and the *Goethe-Stiftung* letter, where simplicity of diction is a prominent feature. Undoubtedly the dovetailing has been skilfully effected at the latter end, so that it is by no means easy to affirm to a line or two where the insertion ceases; but its commencement is abrupt, intrusive, and unaccountable on any other hypothesis. It *was* good matter, on the whole, but here it distracts and disconcerts. On the whole, I said; for the ultra-Feuerbachian cast of pages 279-80, with their remnants of the sibylline "Life of the Future," reminds us too distressingly of the closing page of *Opera and Drama;* which itself, again, may be an outcome of the selfsame hunting up of unused manuscript. Of "the Artist of the Present prefiguring the Life of the Future" one is apt to grow impatient: this *Communication* has merits enough of its own, not to need such ceremonial bolstering.*

So much for interpolation number two, perhaps itself bipartite. Interpolation three brings in the only other member of the contemplated trio of 1850 as yet unaccounted for. Pages 286 to 289 (*P.* I.) are occupied by a dissertation on "Genius," inserted directly before the Wate allegory, which in the Posthumous Papers precedes some jottings upon "genius." Had we not been already led by the short paragraph aforesaid to expect an actual launch on the stream of biography, the

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* The "monumental" interpolation has an extrinsic interest, in that it helps to date the progress of the manuscript. By the time Uhlig arrived, Wagner had evidently got about half-way through; for we find this passage explicitly referred-to on page 326 (*P.* I.), which itself bears tokens of an interruption and a change in sequence of ideas.—N.B. For convenience of reference I quote the page-numbers from the translation in Vol. I. of the *Prose Works*, where this essay covers pages 269 to 392.—W. A. E.

first part of this dissertation, with its contrast between the artistic and the "political" temperament, would have been most welcome. On the other hand, the definition, or rather the denial, of "genius" itself, in the latter half, is laboured and inconclusive; chiefly because the "communistic" standpoint of 1849-50 has to end by compromising with the less doctrinaire of 1851 and admitting the saving virtue of "the force of purely human Individuality"—which, if one omits the unnecessary qualification "purely human," is tantamount to begging the entire question. Further, this interpolation is violently split into its two component parts by a passage apparently meant to unite them, namely a personal disclaimer that ill accords with the "let us denote" (*Bezeichnen wir*) of the immediately preceding sentence, where the tone was that of a logician embarking on some lengthy exposition of general principles. The resultant effect on the reader is confusing; after being led down one blind alley after another, he may possibly lay the book aside before he has passed into the deeply interesting glades beyond.

For all these changes I hold Uhlig responsible, to the extent of having begged for salvage of material lying by. Though prefaces and introductions were never Wagner's forte in literature, when left to his own devices he could turn out something far more workmanlike than this; witness the Introduction to *Opera and Drama*, which is clear, precise, methodical, yet not without a higher flight. And if you restore the present exordium to what I assume to have been its original form, you obtain a statement plain enough and far from tiresome. This you may effect by the simple expedient of passing straight from line 4 on page 274 to the middle of page 283, omitting all the intervening matter; from there read on to the second short paragraph on page 286;* omit the next five pages, till you come to the actual commencement of narrative on page 291. The introduction would thus be reduced from 22 pages to a trifle under 8; surely ample prelude to a work of but a hundred pages proper. All save one of the 14 "interpolated" pages, and that the last of them, I would gladly exchange for an extra helping of autobiography; and I fancy the most confirmed gourmand of abstract speculation would agree with me. Had Liszt been the visitor, Liszt *solus*, we may be pretty sure what his advice would have been: Strike out everything before it, and begin with your Wate allegory. But in Uhlig, unaccustomed to the larger world of letters, the sense of literary form was not developed; the art of filing and polishing was an art beyond his ken. His dread lest a

* Even p. 284 seems to have a minor interpolation of about one-third of a page, from the end of line 2 to "Beethoven"; apparently new matter introduced, in the act of fair-copying, to effect a little better harmony with what now went before.—W. A. E.

single word of his master's should be dropped, we may judge from a reply of Wagner's dated Nov. 28,'51 : "As to the changes [demanded by Härtel] in the Preface to 3 Opera poems, set your mind at rest. How could you imagine I would alter anything essential?" For his own part, Wagner was thoroughly exhausted—to say nothing of the incubation of the *Ring*—and therefore we must look with lenience on the faults in this exordium which I have here endeavoured to explain.—W. A. E.

Page 187. PRINCESS WITTGENSTEIN AS SCHOLAR.—Before the Altenburg establishment was broken up, we hear of no literary work that bears the Princess Carolyne's name ; beyond the infelicitous plot for Berlioz' *Troyens* (subsequently dedicated to her), she had confined herself to collaboration with Liszt in musical essays. At Rome, however, she developed a stupendous literary activity on the ecclesiastic side, and ultimately kept a private staff of printers continually employed—her sole luxury in this period. Of her minor works, the only one to attain a tolerable circulation was *Entretiens pratiques à l'usage des femmes du monde ;* yet not until it had been entirely recast by a Frenchman (Henri Lasserre), and rechristened *La vie chrétienne au milieu du monde.* Her magnum opus, *Des causes intérieures de la faiblesse extérieure de l'église*, was completed but a few days before her death (March 1887) ; in her will she left instructions for the publication of this white elephant after a quarter of a century should have elapsed. As the work was placed on the Index before completion—certain private copies of portions of it having already been distributed among high dignitaries of the Church—what public will there be to read it? There lies one half of a double tragedy, the other half of which is indicated in the following letter of Liszt's :—

"February 2, 1885, Budapesth.

"On Friday evening I saw Cardinal Haynald again. He amiably reproached me for having told you that he had no time to read your books. He was amazed at their prodigious erudition, theologic, political, administrative, universal—above all, at the unparalleled acquaintance, which you have acquired and exhibited, with the whole organism of affairs in Catholicity. He finds striking truth in your characterisation of the immense ecclesiastic personnel—from the minor abbés and religious orders, up to the bishops and cardinals. In this respect Haynald considers that no other author, sacred or secular, has equalled your astounding survey—hardly so much as approached it here and there. If Gros Jean, according to the proverb, could shame his curé —with better reason you could shame, magisterially and victoriously, the most eminent minds in the Holy College—with still greater reason the lay writers, their co-operators, adherents, and even their dissidents. Your prognostic to Haynald, that his successor will attentively read

the 25 vols. of the *Causes*, reminded me of the Englishman who said to a Pope in the 18th century, 'I am enchanted with Rome; I have seen everything, and conscientiously seen again—the only thing lacking is a conclave.'—Haynald told me also of a letter of 15 to 20 pages you wrote him some time back. He tried to sum it up for himself, with the result—the Princess thinks me a great ass! I observed to him that I had been obliged to draw the same conclusion as regards my unworthy self from several of your letters addressed to your very humble servant.—Last night arrived your latest letter. What things you say!—My patron Saint François de Paule is guardian of the humble and lowly—to them I belong with all my heart. Your

SCLAVISSIMO."

That was within eighteen months of Liszt's death, and unfortunately too many of his letters in the last quarter of his life shew the same suffering from indignities at the hand of a confirmed theological bookworm. But let us wipe them out, as he himself did, with the memory of another side of the princess's nature. Four months before the end, he writes her: "I thank you for writing to me in large characters. My eyesight is deplorably weakening, and I should not wish to ask another person to read me what you write me." It was an act of womanly thoughtfulness, appreciated with all Liszt's inborn delicacy of feeling.—W. A. E.

Page 198. ROBERT FRANZ ON LOHENGRIN. — Oct. 30, 1851, Wagner tells Uhlig: "Bülow wrote me a long letter yesterday; he is sending me a copy of an article by a very well-known musician, but desirous to remain unknown; an article, so it seems, which you have not read as yet. It is interesting—as an occurrence, and you must try and procure it for yourself. You will find it in the feuilleton of the *Neue Oderzeitung*, 28th, 30th, or 31st July: 'A letter on Richard Wagner.'" A month later Hans himself writes Uhlig: "Enclosed you will find the letter of Robert Franz you ask for. He has begged me not to divulge the secret of his authorship. So, if you get it reprinted, please do so anonymously, i.e. without Franz's name. Perhaps I may succeed, later on, in moving him to cancel that embargo." Evidently Bülow did succeed, for the reprint in the *Neue Zeitschrift* of March 26, 1852, bears the author's full signature. The original letter was manifestly written at the beginning of June, its addressee being Georg Spiller von Hauenschild (1822-55), mentioned under his literary alias of "Max Waldau" in two of Liszt's letters of May '51 to Princess Wittgenstein.—The said reprint I render in extenso:—

"*A letter on Richard Wagner.*

"The following lines are merely a fragment, taken from a private letter to a well-known poet. The judgment expressed therein has the greater claim to lack of bias as the writer had absolutely no intention

of making it public. You believe, Mr Editor, that the publication of this letter may help to correct the fluctuating and often contradictory opinions on Richard Wagner's works, especially as there now exists among the public sufficient sympathetic interest in the master's cause. Should that really be the case, no one would be more sincerely pleased than the subscriber, who could but reckon it as his greatest honour to have employed his scanty powers in helping a much-maligned and sorely-misjudged man to his deserts; a man whom the future will probably judge otherwise than the present can boast of.

". . . . . You write me concerning Opera, and what you term 'dæmonic' music: both points I answer in one breath, by telling you of—Richard Wagner. Rather late, you will say, as Stahr no doubt has written you direct about the performance of *Lohengrin* at Weimar; moreover you will already have read Liszt's, and now Stahr's, published articles. I approach you with neither the energy of Liszt nor the brilliance of Stahr; but your observations shall be considered, analysed, and, wherever possible, made use of; for which purpose I know no better basis than the 'Art-work of the Future.' You will easily decipher the answer I intend for you, even when I do not cite the special points you raise.

"In the first place, an admission that must sound almost comic from the mouth of a professional musician. Until recently I had not seen, or rather, heard a note of Wagner's, and my prejudice was founded on nothing but a glance at the full score of *Tannhäuser*. There everything was so confused and long-winded, to the eye; no concerted action, all disjointed (musical) dialogue. . . . I grew very uneasy; for universal suffrage is certainly an integral part of any reasonable constitution in the musical republic, as much as in others; but, no less than anywhere else in the world, it pre-assumes a common fund of public spirit. Both men and notes are true republicans, with an innate right to a voice, only when they sustain the whole; not when they ogle their own persons in stolid self-sufficiency, or strive in obtrusive egoism to form a planetary-system apart.—So I shared the dislike of almost all my art-colleagues for the twofold rebel, and believed I was respecting my conscience when I piously made a cross at Wagner's name, pulled a sour face, and pharisaically hugged myself with: Lord, I thank thee, and so on.—More of chance than wish placed the 'Art-work of the Future' in my hands. To my amazement I derived from that work the conviction that its author must have a good share of clear and methodic ideas in his head, and that he would undertake absolutely nothing that could not be vindicated from some sort of higher standpoint. Liszt was so obliging as to invite me to Weimar, and assured me in advance that *Lohengrin* would more than repay all the toil of the journey. The 'Art-work of the Future,' in

union with that eccentric score, had set me in great suspense; and it needed that, if I were to be lured to such a distance for an opera. You know that I love your art no less than mine, and therefore you will comprehend that I am radically against everything that has borne the name of Opera hitherto. If I listened to the music, the plot escaped me; if I paid attention to the latter, I lost too much of the former; and oh! the words supplied as scaffold for the notes!—In short, I had discerned no unity, and came away with nothing but fragmentary impressions. My dislike applied not merely to Meyerbeer and Flotow, but my heresy touched Mozart (N.B. on the stage) as much as the others. At last I had accustomed myself to thinking that my power of judgment in stage affairs must be terribly limited; an assumption that won in plausibility when I took count of the lively interest displayed by many people with whom I was in perfect harmony on the other cardinal points. Nevertheless, I abode by my maxim: Opera dishevels poetry, and tears music into rags through the dialogue and other pretty things. After *Lohengrin* I shall have to frame it otherwise, I suppose. From the first bar I was right inside, and before long I was so reacted upon by what was proceeding on the stage and in the orchestra, that, during the whole performance indeed, I imagined myself to be singing and playing with the rest of them. How odious is the frivolity of the French school, which nowadays usurps our stage, beside so deep and noble a conception! By all means, this latter presupposes something our present theatre-public appears to have almost lost—self-abandonment and free activity of feeling; an ethical process, without which there can be no talk of a thorough understanding of art!—

"Don't imagine I have become a fanatic in one night. On the contrary, I regard the thing quite calmly, and shall withhold my blame as little as my praise. But the case is this: what the philosophy of Hegel was unable to give birth to, a perfect unitarian art-achievement, in Wagner has become a fact through the teaching of Feuerbach [?]. Dizzy Abstraction with its dictatorial pathos was bound to freeze hard in its category-hunt; organic life, with power of evolution, could proceed from nothing but a seizure of the concrete situation and the urgently self-conscious moment." [The Feuerbachian jargon I must leave to take care of itself, as a sign of the times.—W. A. E.]

"Wagner's opera is a whole, and therefore enjoyable and intelligible only when represented. Other operatic music may also comport with the concert-hall; Mozart's, for instance, there alone can I grasp in its full worth. To sever Wagner's music from his poem—if such a thing could be imagined—would be complete annihilation. Hence the impression made upon me by the score of *Tannhäuser*. In my prejudice against everything that is Opera, I never dreamt it possible

that music could fit itself and subordinate itself to a story to such an extent, without thereby doing away with itself. In *Lohengrin* it simply seems to import light and shade into the work, to adorn, explain, and add lucidity to scenes and feelings; it simply gives greater scope to the effect of the action, extends it to those nerves which otherwise would have no share in the enjoyment, and thus draws the whole man into the magic circle. Nowhere does it occur to it, to spread its independent self, or to move in the traditional fenced-off forms of the schools: it accompanies the development of the poem, breathes tenderness or vigour into that, fills out, steps back, or looms in the foreground, according as need is. But all the time you are pinned to a ripe and able-bodied whole.

"On the other hand, if you adopt the standpoint of that criticism which insists on viewing Opera as a work of music—not as that peculiar organism of many members, whereof only a portion rests on Tone—you will certainly find a striking indigence. A few essential motives have to furnish the musical repast; they are retained from one end of the opera to the other, and we see them cropping up again and again when chaos threatens and everything seems about to fly to pieces. Beyond these ground-factors (*Grundkörper*) the remainder seems a disconnected mass, when viewed apart, with its centre of gravity not in the voice, but in the instruments. Yet, for nothing in the world must you imagine regular instrumental sentences [or "periods"—*regelrechte Instrumentalsätze*], such as Beethoven's example has made a fixture of. With Wagner they repose on pure timbre-effect, on reflex-movements of tone. In this respect he is great; here the most diligent studies have manifestly borne charmed fruit. It is a veritable world of fable, a true tone-rainbow. Unheard-of sound-combinations, but ever of unrivalled beauty. The whole introduction to *Lohengrin* is a féerie, and, even with one's critical spectacles on one's nose, one can't defend oneself from ecstasy. Your nerves vibrate; but how?!!

"Above those sound-combinations (*Klangcombinationen*), for which I purposely avoid the rigid title 'chord,' is set the vocal part. It is cast in peculiar, I might almost say, strange intervals, and is wellnigh exclusively recitativesque. Only occasionally, where a burst of passion irrecusably demands it, does it mount to arioso; a stimulant in no case hackneyed by abuse, and naturally never failing of effect.—It is hard to understand how the singers can stamp such seemingly rebellious types of melody upon their memory; yet they declare that, once it has taken hold, each note remains as if chiselled on their brain. Make a note of that: it speaks for your theory, for that natural general-bass and dæmonic chord-formation of which you talk.—For the rest, the music keeps step through thick and thin with the thoughts portrayed. The modulation obeys no traditional rules, no recognised

form; it is wholly dithyrambic: frank C major immediately beside D major, is quite an everyday occurrence. Of symmetrically carved-out rhythmic figures there is no question [?]: one thrusts the other forward without cease and without visible goal. . . . Yet, despite these abnormities and monstrosities, the right thing, the indispensably needful for that moment, is always hit. Explain it who can! Whereas with Meyerbeer galloon (*Raffinement*) is brazenly spread everywhere, here it is used as naught but an accessory, and, in spite of its exquisite form, it helps with charmingly naïve grace to round the whole. Throughout the performance I was never jarred; on the contrary, not for a moment did I lose the sense of being in presence of a majestic creation that stood fast by its own right. Whether it was the charm of the unheard, the absolutely new, or what not, I can recall but a handful of products that have so completely thrilled me, so 'dæmonically,' to use your word for once, as *Lohengrin*.

"And the audience? It listened rapt, devoutly moved and stirred, as if it felt the puissance of a ringing river flowing toward it from the heart of the world. Another solid proof that, be men never so blasé, they feel by instinct and become believers when a draught from the mysterious and yet so limpid wellspring of eternal Nature is offered them. That, in effect, is the might of the primordial (*des Urkräftigen*), of the Dæmonic element; which the pigeon-holers, too feeble to grasp it, as you rightly observe, are so fond of docketing as the Cacodæmonic.

"Well, do you fancy that these facts have completely drawn me over to the view you advocate with so much fervour? Do you fancy I share your conviction that a notable expansion lies before Music in the near future? As handmaid, giving up her independence, yes—; exerting her old, ancestral right, no! In spite of Richard Wagner, in my humble opinion there may be little hope of a future for the 'Artwork of the Future.' He, who is poet and composer in one; to whom therefore falls the whole labour, whole victory—nothing can possibly lure him into rivalry with himself; so he lets music be music, and writes an—opera. But what he thereby proves most strikingly, is the poverty of the musical invention of our age. He is imbued with the misery of our present art-conditions to such a degree, that he does not scruple to—aggravate it.

"To conclude, I give you in a nutshell my view of Opera and 'dæmonic' music, music resting on nothing but physical laws of sound; a provisional view, I would have you expressly observe, with no pretence to more than individual validity. Through his double talent Wagner is the only man who could have made an opera which is a complete artwork in all its root-conditions.—Whoever, without his inborn, instinctive feeling of the right and necessary, should try to follow Wagner's sound-prints (*Klangspüren*), or your æolian-harp

system—even if it became the fashion—would do himself and art a serious injury. Wagner is a—phenomenon, a thoroughly original and self-justified nature; the imitators will just be—imitators, and, after their kind, will never lay to heart the old adage:

Quod licet Jovi, non licet bovi.

ROBERT FRANZ."

Apart from a few obscurities of diction, this is the most remarkable tribute ever paid to the instantaneous might of Wagner's genius. At one hearing Franz had seized the secret of the 'music-drama,' just as one reading had convinced him of the master's power of thought. Save for a specifically pro-Wagnerian report on the Ballenstedt festival (341 *ant.*), Franz did not enter the lists again; but he was not a ready-writer, not a musical journalist; and what more could he have said? The value of his opinion on *Lohengrin* resides in its impressionism, if I may be pardoned the "ism"; he had not become a convert to any theory, but its practical illustration took his breath away.—W. A. E.

Page 199. LISZT ON LOHENGRIN IN THE DÉBATS.—About to reprint this review of the Herder-Goethe celebration as the introductory chapter of his *Lohengrin et Tannhäuser* brochure, Liszt refers to "alterations and omissions made by Janin in the *Journal des Débats* of October 22," 1850. To judge from a cursory comparison of those two French versions, the omissions had been decidedly to the article's advantage; Janin having struck his editorial blue-pencil through tiresome generalisations of the princess Wittgenstein's concerning demi-gods, heroes and poets, and so forth. But the *Débats* article contains more, as well as less, than that introductory chapter; for it ends with a long paragraph reduced to half-a-dozen lines in the brochure—a paragraph of historic interest, as a manifesto actually published by a leading Paris newspaper in 1850. After the words "la perfection littéraire d'une tragédie" (cf. page 81 of Liszt's *Gesammelte Schriften* III. ii, "die ganze literarische Vollkommenheit einer Tragödie") Liszt proceeds in the *Débats*:—

"He has done more. Completely imbued with his subject, he has coloured his language with an antique tint that adds to the general effect of this admirable composition. Without employing obsolete words and turns of speech that would have made his diction difficult to understand, with a rare moderation he lends it certain expressions, certain nuances of style, which render still more perfect the illusion by which he imperiously snatches the spectator from the present day and triumphantly transports him to his own domains of poetry and the ideal. Wagner is incontestably one of the first harmonists of our day, one of those who possess the most marvellous secrets of instrumentation, and who have enriched music with the finest melodic conceptions; nevertheless this musician Wagner has no desire that,

in the alliance established by the theatre between poetry and music, the latter should encroach on the rights of her sister. He submits both the one and the other to the exigencies of *the drama;* he desires that each of them shall contribute their portion of omnipotence to the impression to be received by the public; an impression so complete, so entire, so abounding, that neither the greatest favourer of music nor the greatest enthusiast for poetry shall be able to make out a reckoning to which of the arts employed in this drama he is chiefly indebted for his emotion, his tears, his ecstasies. This has become a principle with Wagner, and in his writings we have seen him proclaiming the conviction that the theatre is destined to undergo immense and inevitable changes, and that a new system should henceforth replace the old routine that still supplies us with our tragedies, our comedies, our vaudevilles, our operas. Each of his works has marked an advance along this road. The *Flying Dutchman* is the first opera of Wagner's in which this manner is distinctly to be traced. *Rienzi* still recalled our old customs in the cut of the recitatives, the duets, ensemble-pieces; but *Tannhäuser* already is completely enfranchised, and for the second time we affirm that this work is of so fine a mould, so great a perfection in its smallest details, that it certainly is destined to obtain at no distant date, and from one end of the musical world to the other, a success equal to the success of enthusiasm it has encountered at Dresden and Weimar, the only theatres its novelty of style has not prevented from mounting this masterpiece. *Lohengrin* is conceived on a still more grandiose scale; its libretto represents a drama more complete, more skilled, of higher literary finish; and by the masterly originality of its style, the beauty of its versification, the ingenious arrangement of its plot, its words of eloquent passion, it certainly merited, as in the front rank of the most poetic products the muse of old Germany has inspired in recent times, to figure at the celebration of a festival of which Goethe was the honoured hero.

"We reserve for a subsequent article the analysis of Wagner's new opera; let us say at once, however, that, no matter what puerile obstacles may temporarily oppose the celebrity of this work of a master, it is impossible not to consider *Lohengrin* as an event for German music, and as the durable expression of a whole new system that will be, perhaps, a revolution.

FRANTZ LISZT."

A sequel, it will be observed, is here most definitely announced. Why that sequel never appeared in the *Débats*, is a tantalising question. The editor must have been willing enough at the time, or he would have excised the sentence, "Nous réservons pour un prochain article l'analyse du nouvel opéra de Wagner." The date of publication, however, must be remembered: October 22. On the 18th Liszt

had written Wagner that he *did not absolutely despair* of getting the analysis into *some* French review "some fine day"; that is to say, he had provisionally abandoned all hope of the *Débats*.* Before finishing that letter (which, as we know, was not posted on the 18th) he must have received from the *Débats* people either a proof of the preliminary article, or an intimation that it was about to appear, probably with a request for its sequel; for, in contrast to the "some fine day," the penultimate sentence of the letter to Wagner asks for return of the manuscript of the analysis by a definite date, "du 5 au 10 novembre." It is tolerably certain, then, that if he had but taken the precaution of getting a duplicate of his "sole fair copy" made at home, or had sent the manuscript *direct* to Wagner for that purpose, this sequel also would have appeared in the *Débats*, subject to harmless editorial pruning. There is no way to account for the omission, save by assuming a repeated interference of the Princess Wittgenstein in Liszt's arrangements. On the point of despatching his MS. to Wagner, his hand must have been deflected by the same capricious influence that has turned his October letter itself into a riddle (205 *ant.*). A little more determined promptitude on Liszt's part, and the *Lohengrin* analysis might have been set before the French with a publicity attainable by no amount of brochures.—W. A. E.

Page 207. WAGNER'S ADDITION TO THE LOHENGRIN-ANALYSIS.—The *Illustrirte Zeitung* article of April 12, 1851, i.e. the Wagner-Bülow-Ritter translation, contains the following passages manifestly added by Wagner himself to Liszt-and-Carolyne's account of the Grail-legend. As they have not been adopted either into the *Lohengrin et Tannhäuser* brochure (1851) or into Liszt's *Ges. Schr.* III. ii (cf. pp. 88-9, ed. 1881), I will attempt to save them from oblivion :—

"The myth of the Holy Grail, as Wagner has proved in his *Wibelungen*, is heir and successor to that of the Nibelungen-hoard. Too closely related with specifically-Germanic pagandom to be harmonised with Christianity, the Hoard became a fable void of all deeper meaning. The original Provençal kernel of the saga of the Holy Grail, on the other hand, was easy to associate with kindred old-Judaic tenets, and consequently also with those of the Christian Bible; it therefore passed into the world as symbol of everything the Folk of those days deemed worthy of desire. . . . After the Hoard

* A view confirmed by the recurrence of one or two remarks from this *Débats* paragraph in the analysis proper, as if the latter had been deliberately framed for appearance elsewhere. As a fact, in the *Briefe hervorragender Zeitgenossen* we find a letter reaching Liszt Oct. 8, 1850, in which Gérard de Nerval conveys a half-promise by the editor of the *Revue des deux Mondes* to insert an article on Wagner, provided it did not exceed 4000 words.

had been sublimated into the Grail, and especially after Kaiser Friedrich der Rothbart had found his death on his crusade through too impatient fording of a river, there was linked to this mysterious central point of all that legendary quest, which had its historic base in the crusades—the Grail-temple itself was figured as in the East—there was linked to this the equally mysterious legend of the Swan-knight bound to fare away when asked a forbidden question. From this arose the lovely legend in which we recognise the tragic conflict of belief and love—as Wagner has interpreted it in his poem. Lohengrin, son of Parzival 'the Master of the Grail,' and himself a Grail's-knight, in ordeal-by-arms clears the young Duchess of Brabant from a heavy accusation, forbids her to ask who he is, and makes this interdiction the condition of his sojourn, after the law of the Grail. Love makes the knowledge of her lover's origin a need beyond her silencing; she dares the fatal question, and he must leave her."

The dots in the above translation stand for a brief description of the Grail, its temple and its company of knights; a description (save for Carolyne's "jewel that fell from Lucifer's crown") common to the French and German versions, as also is a neighbouring reference to Klingsor and Wolfram von Eschenbach. In connection with the latter point our curiosity is aroused by a sentence in one of Wagner's letters to Uhlig (No. 30—Aug. 24, '51): "For God's sake omit from the pianoforte score of Lohengrin the *preliminary remarks* in the Weimar textbook (concerning Meister Wolfram). They are *not by me*, and are *worthless*." By whom were they? After what we have already learnt, it would be tolerably safe to name the Princess Wittgenstein; but unfortunately I have been unable to procure a copy of that textbook, the first ever printed for *Lohengrin*. Needless to say, the offending "remarks" do not appear in Breitkopf und Härtel's editions.—W. A. E.

Page 239. From Lohengrin to Young Siegfried: a letter to Stahr. — The same number of the *Zeitschrift der Internationalen Musikgesellschaft* (Oct. 1901) which furnished such welcome material for two Supplemental Notes in our last volume, contains a profoundly interesting letter of Wagner's to Adolf Stahr, the noted democrat, rationalist, prolific author, editor of Aristotle, and future husband of Fanny Lewald. Stahr had just published a long review of *Lohengrin* in two successive feuilletons of the Berlin *National-Zeitung* (May 27-28, 1851), in return for which Liszt had begged Wagner in advance (May 17) to "send him a few lines of thanks" on its appearance. To clear the ground for Wagner's letter of thanks, a passage or two must first be quoted from Stahr's article:—

"Lohengrin has a most enormous advantage over Elsa. He *believes*

because he *knows* through a supramundane gift of insight, whereas he demands that she, unknowing, shall believe in him as in a god. Believer, omniscient, virtuous and victorious without his own merit, at once divine and human, claiming divine honours together with human happiness as lover, husband, prince and commander, he is embodied paradox, personified romanticism. No merit is his, yet everything his reward ; he has no pathos, beyond the abstract-egoistic pathos of his inscrutable divine secret ; and so little fellow-feeling has he for humanity, that he demands of human weakness the utmost he himself can only practise, as a god, through superhuman gifts. When he makes the experience that men are mortals ; when he makes it in the person of his bride, with a fault so small, so natural, so human, so lovable, so rooted in the inmost nature of woman ; a fault only converted into such by an absolutely arbitrary, unreasonable, and inhuman assumption of the old poem, the assumption that the Good ('the blessing of the Grail') will bear no unveiling—alack ! the poet casts aside the only kind of humanly-satisfying solution, and lets his Lohengrin sacrifice love, the happiness and life of the beloved woman, his wife, and the welfare of his new-won kingdom, to his egoism. . . . One might reply with Lessing's dictum : *No man must must !* were it not that Lohengrin has the misfortune to be no man, but a god, or rather a seraphic *soldier*, whose will and conscience repose on nothing but the discipline of Must and the frown of his divine War-lord. . . . To us he is but the spectral shadow of a world-view to whose uprooting every drop of our blood is vowed. For the Montsalvat of the new era and its creed is the ideal of Humanity, and the holy grail-blood of this creed has its chalice in every heart that throbs in breast of man for realisation of that ideal."—This manifestly is the "point" referred-to in the opening of Wagner's letter. It would require a whole essay to reply to it properly ; therefore I confine myself to the remark that the Lohengrin of Wagner's drama is *not* a god. It must not be supposed, however, that Stahr's was a hostile criticism : on the contrary, his article, as Bülow writes to his father (July 6), is "very appreciative, even enthusiastic, though not fulsome." Apart from the question of supernaturalism, the position adopted is completely parallel with that of Robert Franz, Stahr's standpoint being that of a lover of Drama and despiser of Opera ; among other things, he lauds the scene in the bridal chamber as "the finest product of dramatic poetry for many and many a year." His comments on the music are necessarily of less intrinsic value than, though they singularly resemble, those of Franz ; yet I must quote the following in explanation of another passage in Wagner's letter : "His work appeared to me a practical critique, a material polemic, a creative negation. . . . In this respect one might compare Wagner's rigorism against melody, his rhythmic monotony, his disregard of the virtuosic

lement in song, with the zealotry of Lutherism."—Now we are primed or the letter itself :—

"Most honoured Friend,

The best way to give you an idea of the effect our criticism of Lohengrin—only just to hand—has made upon me, vill be to tell you that in all previous discussions of that work—ontrary to all expectation—with a certain hardly-definable smile I ad missed, or rather, found untouched the one point which *you* ave raised with such drastic acumen.

"It is impossible for me to write at length about it now : precisely ow I am in the midst of a generative process that vetoes any ritical excursion. Pardon me, therefore, the brevity with which I hall address to you a few remarks of moment to myself.—

"Between my 'Lohengrin' and my present project lies a world. The torture horrible for one of us, is to stand by and see his loughed-off skin held up as his actual likeness. Were everything as could have wished, my 'Lohengrin' would have long been forgotten or new works attesting my progress sufficiently even to myself.

"Let me run it over. 1847 the music was completely finished add three months for the end of the scoring]. 1848 comes the Revolution : all twilight-mist clears off from me. 1849 I have to lee : with hurrahs I turn my back on the whole old lumber : I air ny chest with a brochure, 'Art and Revolution,' collect my wits in arnest with the little book, 'The Art-work of the Future.' I get he length, at last, of meaning to break with all the world, my home nd all. Then my eye falls one day on the famishing 'Lohengrin'-core : I'm sorry that it should never so much as have sounded ; ood-naturedly I write two lines to Liszt : Should he care for the port, he really should get this up for once at Weimar.—Yes, and it nust be precisely Liszt, who knows so well to take a thing in earnest. —As said, when no one hit upon the point which you have, I almost ad to laugh :—I laugh no longer, but it could wellnigh vex me, that 'Lohengrin' should after all have come to daylight. When you make cquaintance with my present poems, you will understand why !—

"Thus much, though. It really rejoices me, to have stood for once so tubbornly upon the Christian standpoint, and that as artist—with the ullest naïvety. When I had finished the poem of 'Tannhäuser,' omebody wanted me to let Venus conquer over S. Elisabeth :—I ound that very pretty ; only, said I, no 'Tannhäuser,' then, could I vrite. Against the already-versified * 'Lohengrin,' one of my

* In the printed reproduction of the German letter this reads as "fertig-edruckten" ; but Wagner *must* have written "fertig-gedichteten," as he textbook had only been printed at Weimar a few months previously.—V. A. E.

cleverest friends raised the radical demur: Lohengrin should end by becoming human. It was the same demur that makes out your complaint. I actually began to cogitate, and work out proposed alterations for myself: I took no end of pains to palm off something on myself about a humbled god, and so on—luckily none of those changes contented my friend; if I meant to let Lohengrin out, he must out as he was, i.e. as the Christian Folk, in fine, had made him—unless I wished to fall from one inconsequence into another. With positive intoxication I plunged him into music: there was nothing else to be done; at least I thus preserved myself from a rationalistic opera.

"I know what you mean by its monotonous, unrhythmic melody: the answer to the underlying theoretic question I believe I shall have given you, from my side, in the third part of a book to appear ere long, my 'Opera and Drama.' The cause does not lie in the music, but—since Music can be nothing, after all, save the full flower of Speech—in the speech itself, in the Verse. At present we have but fictitious verses, no real ones. Even my own musical expression is still but transcendentally (*aussersinnlich*) connected with the diction: the inner grip of sense and sound (*der kernige, sinnliche Zusammenhang*) had still escaped me. That, however, I have not won from Theory—albeit my theory will meet your eye before the practical work from which I drew it: I have it from my poem 'Siegfried's Tod,' in which I lit quite of itself on the speech that is needed for music.

"In one respect, perhaps, you do me an injustice. You call my 'Lohengrin' a practical polemic against modern Opera; you find in it a proof of puritanic zeal. Good! but do not call it a deliberate polemic: when I wrote that opera I was so engrossed with the subject, that it permitted me no other aim than to bring it with full panoply of sound to light of day; and so far lay that aim from all protesting, that on the contrary I overlooked everything that in reality has turned this work into a protestation. Enough! I cannot criticise just now, perhaps at no time.—But—if you only knew my thoughts to-day, when I read your article! These last six days have I set my pen to work at a 'Young Siegfried':* this very day I have completed

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* As printed in the *Zt d. I. M. G.*, the sentence reads: "Seit 6 Jahren bin ich schon mit der Feder über einen 'jungen Siegfried' her, gerade heute habe ich die Schlussscene" etc.; but I am convinced that the "Jahren," equally with the "fertig-gedruckten" (see last footnote), is either a misreading of the transcriber's, or a printer's error of the *Frankfurter Zeitung's* (where the letter originally appeared—1901, No. 227). *Six* years ago we have nothing but a hint about "Siegfried and Grimmhilde" in the sketch for *Die Meistersinger* (see vol. ii, 383), and it would be stretching an idiom beyond all reason, if Wagner had

he draft (in dialogue) of the closing scene—Brünnhilde's awakening. When you make acquaintance with this scene, please think of me, how must have felt when I heard you speak about me.

"Well, well: I thank you, and hope we shall remain friends! Do ou agree?—Liszt wants the 'Young Siegfried' kept a secret for the resent. When I've finished the verses, I shall send it to Weimar—Liszt will shew it to you at once; then, also, I shall have peace to vrite you more, and—let us hope—better.

"Farewell, and accept once more my hearty thanks!

Yours very sincerely

"Enge, Zurich, May 31, 1851. RICHARD WAGNER."

In course of some highly intelligent comments on this letter in the *Z. d. I. M. G.*, Herr G. Münzer of Breslau remarks: "It is well that we no longer are in the time of Wagner-heckling. How easily a charge of ngratitude [towards Liszt], and who knows what besides? might have been distilled from this letter to Stahr. Yet it simply teaches us what cannot be too often repeated: namely, that one should never attach oo great importance to isolated letters, i.e. to hasty expressions of a momentary mood. It is intelligible that in the first intoxication of creator's-oy, on the day, perhaps in the same hour, when Wagner had set the key-tone to his *Siegfried* poem, he should have felt immeasurably raised above all his earlier creations." That's true enough; but neither must we take too seriously, as Herr Münzer does, the master's words 'Should he care for the sport"—"*wenn's ihm Spass mache*"; they are directly followed by "*Nun muss es auch gerade Liszt sein, der so Ernst zu machen weiss*," in which the *auch* and *gerade* should be particularly noted, also that the historical, or narrative, present tense s used, the same as in the *rest* of the narration—the "earnest" being therefore meant to qualify the "jest" or "sport." After the lapse of a twelvemonth, Wagner may well have forgotten the exact tone of his request to Liszt, but the irony of his whole situation in the Spring of 1850 had sunk deep into his mind; at that time every effort of the kind would seem but "sport" to a drowning man; and in fact it was not until *ten weeks* afterwards (July 2, 1850) that he had returned to

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talked of his "pen" being "at a Young Siegfried" for that length of time; whereas six *days* would tally perfectly with the letter to Liszt of nine days prior to that to Stahr: "I am only waiting for the first fine sunny day, to begin with my pen, too, the poem of my 'young Siegfried,' which already is finished in my head." Here the "auch mit der Feder" exactly corresponds with the "schon mit der Feder" of the letter to Stahr; and the commencement of the actual draft of *Young Siegfried* may therefore be dated May 25 or 26, thus explaining the "in the midst of a generative process" at the beginning of this letter.—W. A. E.

the matter in earnest, himself the last to hear that the Weimar people had taken up a proposal he had wellnigh abandoned meanwhile.

With regard to the chief point of interest in this letter, namely the implied acquiescence, or partial acquiescence in Stahr's criticism of the Grail-knight's character, it is by no means strange to find the poet momentarily nonplussed by arguments of a skilled logician who himself had hastily confused the premises. What artistic masterwork in the world could stand against the rationalistic battering-ram? And we must remember that Wagner is writing before he has had time to digest Stahr's brilliant exegesis; he can scarcely have received the feuilleton until that morning. His own affection for his hero soon returns, as we may judge from a tiny billet sent to Liszt (Aug. 23, '51*): "*You* understood Lohengrin *aright*—Stahr not. I withdraw my assent to his verdict,—I gave it in too great haste." Here we have also the key to a footnote in the *Communication*—the manuscript whereof had been sent to the printers exactly a week before the billet to Liszt: "As to this reproach I have the recent testimony of a talented reviewer, who *during* the performance at Weimar—by his own confession—found nothing to criticise, but gave his undivided interest to a moving tale. The doubt which *afterwards* assailed him, I am delighted to be able to plead in self-defence, has never occurred to the *genuine artist: he* could understand me wholly —a thing impossible to the critical mind" (*P.* I. 342). So far was Wagner from *resenting* serious criticism, however, that in February '53 he begs Liszt to lend Stahr a copy of the newly-printed *Ring des Nibelungen* "with kind remembrances, as he was the first littérateur to take notice of me as poet!"

Finally, in *Opera and Drama* we have Wagner adopting from Stahr's article a very happy simile. Describing his impressions of *Lohengrin*, Stahr had said: "The instrumental music seemed to form but a mobile lake, on whose gently-swelling waves was rocked the boat of song, obeying toillessly the steersman's oar." Wagner has expanded this into the celebrated lake-and-boat analogy adorning the close of cap. iv, Part III. (see *P.* II., 314-5), evidently added to the work in its proof-stage, summer 1851.—W. A. E.

Page 248. ROECKEL ATTEMPTS TO ESCAPE FROM PRISON.—An entirely misleading version of this incident is given by the late F. Praeger in his *Wagner as I knew him*—a book which, although withdrawn from circulation by its *German* publishers for very good

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* Had Liszt been meanwhile shewn the letter to Stahr, and expressed a pained surprise? There is no published letter of Liszt's to correspond to this billet.—W. A. E.

reasons, appears to be still regarded with a sneaking partiality by heedless writers in the English tongue. They may find it of interest to compare Praeger's page 182 with the following summary of its manifest source, namely Roeckel's own story, which I will supplement by quotations from the contemporary *Deutsche Allg. Zeitung*.

Roeckel, by his own account, had already plotted an escape from the fortress of Königstein: ready dressed, he was waiting one night for the preconcerted signal, when an accident aroused suspicion, and he avoided detection only by slipping into bed with his clothes on (*Sachsen's Erhebung* p. 213). About a year after his removal to Waldheim (Aug. 1850) a far more elaborate plot was hatched among a round dozen of the political prisoners, Heubner and Heinze declining to join in it. Though the prisoners were fairly effectually isolated, they managed to communicate with one another by signs such as tapping on the party-walls of adjoining cells, and also through some of the military warders. The incident is dated in the mind of its prime mover, Roeckel, by the fact that the prisoners were admitted to the private garden of the temporary Governor, von Bünau (humanely inclined), to view the eclipse at the end of July 1851, at which time the project was well under way. Money was needed, for bribes, disguises, carriages etc.; Clara von Glümer, an authoress and sister to one of the prisoners (ex-Lieut. in the Saxon army), assists in furnishing funds, as also does Dr Florenz Schulze, who had previously lent Roeckel his pass for that bootless journey to Prague in 1849. Ladders, keys etc., were in readiness for the appointed night, Oct. 1; but the non-arrival of one key ordered from Leipzig led to disclosure at the eleventh hour. A friendly soldier had written to a comrade quartered near Leipzig, begging him to hasten the transmission of this key, and incautiously supplying other particulars; that comrade having already left the cantonment, the letter was returned to the postmaster at Waldheim, who opened it and reported to the military commander. Roeckel, as ringleader, was punished by still stricter confinement and scantier, coarser food; his daily walk in the prison-garden was cut off, and his exercise restricted for the next 6 or 7 years to the courtyard; knives and scissors were taken away from him, and soon afterwards he was removed to a much darker cell in the basement. At the end of December '51, a further discovery having been made of the circulation of secret letters among the captives, he was allowed no book except the Bible for 2 whole years, and forced to spin at an antiquated spinning-wheel.

Such is Roeckel's account, unverifiable as to the severity and duration of the punishment, but confirmed in other details by the *Deutsche Allgemeine*, where we read under date "Dresden, 2. Oct.," that "a physician of this city was arrested last night, and several papers were seized in his dwelling." Oct. 4 the *D. A. Z.* reports the

physican's name as Dr F. Schulze, but erroneously supposes the arrest to be in connection with an extensive plot lately discovered in Paris ; next day it corrects the latter supposition. Page 2113 of the same newspaper, under date, "Oct. 7," refers to a "regrettable incident at Waldheim," about which its editor does not know much at first hand, but quotes from the *Freimüthige Sachsen-Zeitung:* "Dr Schulze had already made an excursion to Waldheim in August, to bribe soldiers there to assist in the forcible liberation of condemned rebel-leaders—particularly Roeckel and Glümer. Through the offer of considerable sums (it is said, 3000 thlr) he succeeded in winning-over four of the guard." Then follows the story of the discovery of wax-impressions of locks, and the story of the incriminating letter, attributed by the *F. S. Z.* to Schulze himself. Other correspondents of the *D. A. Z.* (p. 2116) give the same version of the letter as Roeckel himself, and add that 3 of the Waldheim soldiers had been brought in chains to Leipzig on the 5th of October. Further rumours about the same event are rife in the *D. A. Z.* for the next few days, during which we also read of the arrest of Frau Schröder-Devrient on the 7th. Under date "Dresden, 11. Oct.," the same journal reports (p. 2145), "Dr Fl. Schulze has already been handed over to the Royal tribunal at Waldheim." Nov. 17 (*ibid.* 2403), "Dr Schulze and brewery-owner Strasser, implicated in the Waldheim-escape affair, have been discharged [on parole, *ibid.* 2483] and received with hearty sympathy by their more intimate friends." They are to come up for judgment later. Meanwhile we read of arrests for celebrating the day of Blum's execution ; the suppression of Kossuth's portrait ; continued convictions for the May-revolt of more than two years back ; also of one political prisoner who committed suicide while waiting for the King to commute his ten-years sentence.

All of this falls within the period of Wagner's water-cure at Albisbrunn, and we may easily imagine him discussing it with ex-Captain Müller, till he finally convinces himself of the fruitlessness of every hope that things will mend. Whereas he had written to Uhlig on October 22, '51 : "I shall work at nothing but art, in future, except a little downright Humanism"—on the 18th of December, just after the coup d'état in France, he writes to the same correspondent : "You will shortly hear of things that will make it comprehensible why I already give up all attempt to combat the ruling idiocy, stupidity and baseness—why I shall let the rotten rot, and spend my remaining powers on production and enjoyment, not on the tormenting and utterly resultless endeavour to galvanise the corpse of European civilisation."

To complete the Dr Schulze tale : not until August 1852 does the Court of First Instance pass sentence on those implicated in the attempt at rescue of September '51 ; then Schulze is condemned to

6 months' imprisonment, Strasser and Clara v. Glümer to 4 months each.—It was through Schulze, it will be remembered, that Wagner had transmitted his first letter to Roeckel (of Aug. 24, '51), unaware that a plot was then hatching at Waldheim; and it is probably to be attributed to this episode, not only that Wagner received no answer until September '52, but also that some of the books he had sent to the captive went astray, i.e. were confiscated.—W. A. E.

Page 315. SWISS NEWSPAPERS AND THE FLYING DUTCHMAN.—In addition to its own enthusiastic notices of the *Flying Dutchman* week at Zurich, the *Eidgenössische Zeitung* reprints May 11, 1852, the following review contributed to the *Bund* of Berne by a Zurich correspondent :—

"To the success of the *Fliegender Holländer* its admirable execution, in the first place, contributed much. Under Wagner's control the orchestra becomes a single instrument, so to say, from which the master evokes the rich world of its tones with the finest of feeling and the freest of will. The principal rôles were conceived by Rauch, Pichon and Kaufhold with sedulous intelligence, and rendered with most commendable virtuosity. Any other of the better class of operas, rehearsed with such diligence and represented with such means and under a like conductor, must necessarily have doubled its usual effect. In the second place the text, of Wagner's own inditing, rang true to one's heart: here we have pure German once again, the poetry of a German heart, bearing its own stamp of nobility! Finally the music: let one think as one will about Wagner, regard him as the gifted pioneer of an Art of the Future, or as a genius driven to fantastic eccentricities by inner discontent, thus much is certain—his music exerts a magical power, and the more strongly the oftener one hears it. Not so much through an overwhelming mass of sound, which rather benumbs than refreshes; nor through the dæmonic crash of dissonances that cramp one's breast till they are resolved at last into soothing harmony: no, through the originality of its melodies, welling directly from keen emotion; melodies wherein rhythm and strength and euphony and truth of expression are united in most exquisite abundance. More still, and mainly, through the psychologic declamation—*sit venia verbis*—that runs through the whole work. His music declaims his poem: the powerful thoughts of the latter receive their final exposition through their masterly-instrumented musical vehicle. No throat-acrobatics are here, no flourishes the very sight of which is odious. The human being, simple and quite true, steps before us and sings with all the energy of reverberation [!] the feelings of a brimming heart. Such music is not to amuse; its effect on the soul goes far deeper; the wondrous sound takes no refusal, it searches the inmost quick of life with blessing or ban; and, risen from the

most mysterious depths of Nature, to them does it strike back with drastic force. In that lies Wagner's greatness."

The style of much of this is transcendental; yet beneath its shambling metaphors there lies an insight denied to the *Signales* and *Grenzbotens*, eh! the *Times* and *Athenæum* of the 'fifties.—W. A. E.

Page 343. DEDICATION OF LOHENGRIN.—Unique as is the whole tenour of this dedication, it is even more unique in its public adherence to the second person singular—a characteristic of which it must be robbed in English :—

"DEDICATED TO HIS DEAR FRIEND
FRANZ LISZT.

"My dear Liszt,

It was you who woke the silent pen-strokes of this score to light and ringing life; without your rare affection, my work would still lie motionless and dumb—perchance forgotten in some chest among my lumber; to no one's ear would that have driven which stirred my heart and fired my fancy when, a live performance ever in my mind, I wrote it down wellnigh five years ago. The beautiful act of a friend's devotion, which raised what I had merely willed to actual deed, won many a new friend to me; it prompts me now to try if this same written work, cognisance whereof already has moved yourself to give it publicly, may also wake in others the wish to copy you. Very faint though be the hope to see my work made known to wider circles by lifelike reproductions—since even the most zealous intervention of my friends must encounter a condition of our public art-life they haply might surmount in wish, but not just yet in deed—still, merely to inspire them with that wish would in itself rejoice me; wherefore, while publishing the score, I place at its head the name of that friend of mine whose victorious energy has already turned the wish aroused in him to potent deed. So may you be a guide and example to all who find it in their power to love me; as which I therefore introduce you to them by dedicating to yourself my work in presence of the world.

"The present publication has this sense alone; in nowise the intention to erect myself a literary monument. Were that the case, I should have had to insist on the usual literary garb supplied by engraving on metal-plates—a process costing so much time, moreover, as to have rendered it impossible for my publishers to comply with my wish for the score's speedy appearance. I therefore gave my approval to the beautiful handwriting of a very conscientious copyist, and hope you may not deny it your own if I beg you kindly to accept the dedication of this printed manuscript; for it is by no means a 'book,' but merely the sketch for a work that can truly exist only when it so attains to physical presentment to eye and ear as you first

brought it. May its sound travel farther, then; some day to hear of this, shall also be my consolation that maybe I shall never—hear my work myself!

Zurich, May 1852.

Your

RICHARD WAGNER."

In the second paragraph the expression "printed manuscript" requires elucidation. The 1852 score is *lithographed*, from a copy made for that purpose by some other hand than Wagner's, probably that of an employé of Messrs Härtels. The formal dedication, on the other hand, is engraved; whilst the letter, "My dear Liszt" and so on, is printed in ordinary type.—The sad last words came so far true, that Wagner never heard his *Lohengrin* until nine years from the date of this its dedication.—W. A. E.

Page 399. THE KING OF SAXONY AND THE TANNHÄUSER-REVIVAL. —"Brockhaus's paper," i.e. the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, published in its issue for the 29th October 1852 the three subjoined accounts of an event that was to have no small effect on the artist's fortunes:—

"□ Dresden, Oct. 27. Richard Wagner's 'Tannhäuser,' to which different quarters had long been looking forward for various, perhaps even contrary reasons, was yesterday restored to our stage, also, newly-rehearsed. A house literally filled to its last seat awaited the representation, and a large number of persons sought tickets in vain. Beyond the interest attaching to a work so much discussed, a work notoriously first given here, and repeated 19 times in somewhere about three years (from Oct. 19, 1845 to Dec. 1, 1848), so exceptional an attendance is perhaps attributable in part to the belief that some sort of party-demonstrations would occur—a belief that may have been inspired by several strange notices in the Dresdner Anzeiger openly and avowedly identifying person and work, and which seemed moreover to be shared by the custodians [i.e. police—"*Aussichtsbehörde*"]. Nevertheless that belief was disappointed, like many another before, and this time, we may add, happily so: the public maintained a thoroughly correct demeanour; in fact we confess that we had expected more enthusiastic applause, albeit, on the other hand, we may not have agreed with all the places where its salvoes broke loose. The audience itself was a peculiar one; a remark that applies especially to the best seats, which presented quite a different physiognomy from the usual, e.g. in the absence of all uniform; apart from those on duty, not an officer did we see in the theatre. To ourselves it seems neither the time nor the place to indulge in diffuse expectorations [*sic*] upon the work itself. Much has been published about it during these years, both for and against, with embitterment or with enthusiasm; little with that critical impartiality which would simply serve the

cause of art unbiased and un-misled. The acts concerning it are far from closed, but here we mean to lodge neither accusation nor plea; the one we consider as little in place here as the other. Thus much ought not to be withheld, however: that we ascribe to the work, regarded as a product of modern art-development, an importance which fully justifies its revival among us too; and that to us it seems tactless, for a party arrogating to itself the exclusive title of Royalist and Patriotic, to attack a revival which really was not possible without the Royal consent. In any case the work itself is neither made better nor worse through its author's having had to flee his country; in any case a work of art stays what it is, big or little, significant or insignificant, be its originator an 'angel or devil'!—

"The new inscenation was outwardly brilliant, the music most carefully and admirably rehearsed by Kapellmeister Reissiger, who for that cause was called at the close—a distinction we have never known to be conferred here on any conductor, unless for a work of his own. The execution itself was a very distinguished one in the orchestra as on the stage, and for the most part bore witness to liking and alacrity; which calls the more for recognition, as the composer might easily have impaired that alacrity by his recent very tactlessly published [?] and somewhat bitterly disparaging remarks on the previous representation here (under his own control). The connoisseur knows with what serious difficulties the executants have to contend in this work; and all the greater is the acknowledgment due to so successful a surmounting of them. HH. Tichatschek and Mitterwurzer (Tannhäuser and Wolfram) won liveliest applause; Frl. Agnes Bunke, also, gave the Elisabeth with very happy success; and the same must be said of Frau Howitz-Steinan in the very difficult and thankless part of Venus, which she tactfully kept far from all exaggeration, so easily possible here. Only Herr Conradi (Landgraf) was less competent, alike in voice and by-play; whereas HH. Weixlstorfer, Abiger, Krelinger and Weiss (Walther von der Vogelweide, Biterolf, Heinrich der Schreiber, Reinmar von Zweter) lent very effective support, particularly in the ensembles of the first and second finales, and Frl. Bredo, also, rendered a very good account of the small but difficult goatherd's song in the first act. The ensemble was rounded and precise, and if the Pilgrims' Chorus in the last act was appreciably out of tune (the only actual defect in the whole performance), that is really almost more the fault of the composer than of the executants [!]. A few little unevennesses in the representation will soon be adjusted at the next repetition. The opera's ending, partially changed from what it was before, no doubt is more theatrically effective; the earlier one we deem poetically deeper. The applause was very warm, particularly also ["*namentlich auch*"—i.e. beyond that bestowed on Reissiger?] for the principal performers, and moreover expressed itself in repeated

calls; Hr. Tichatschek and Frl. Bunke were also called to the front after the grand duet in the second act."

A specimen of musical reporting at its shoddiest, and much more invertebrate in the original; but unfortunately that loathsome word "expectoration" is employed with just as little sense of its accepted meaning even by writers of some pretence to culture, such as Brendel himself, since the German journalist invariably comes to grief with words of Latin derivation. An underling of Reissiger's would appear to have been the perpetrator, if one may judge by the praise here heaped on the conductor, the blame dealt out to old Fischer's department, and the reference to Wagner's Guide—which, as a matter of fact, was *not* "published," even in its expurgated form, until several weeks later (p. 363 *ant.*). The *D. A. Z.* itself makes no comment, but proceeds with the contribution of a second correspondent:—

"† Dresden, Oct. 27. Yesterday's representation of Richard Wagner's 'Tannhäuser' passed off without any manner of disturbance, although a certain coterie had not omitted instigations thereto. The only political demonstration, that accompanied the performance of this opera, was the ostentatious [the reporter, of course, misterms it "*ostensible*"] abstention of the military and a portion of the higher aristocracy. The seats in the grand circle, the first tier and the amphitheatre, however, did not feel any lighter for it, as the valued intellect of Dresden, of noble and of burgher standing, made glad the orphaned places [here we have a wag]. The public shewed its grateful sense of the King's magnanimous assent to the opera's representation by moderating every sign of joy. And the higher the region, by all accounts, whence sprang the opposition to performance of the simple romantic artwork, the higher must we prize that noble saying of our King's, 'that he had no memory for ingratitude' and therefore could give his sanction to the representation. Indeed it is too wonderful, though, that a number of people should pretend to see in this representation permitted by the highest authority 'a special personal predilection for the composer.' We should rather think there were little thanks to be reaped with this insinuation, as it can but repose on an intentional perversion of the truth. Your musical reporter □ will probably give an account of yesterday's representation of the opera itself; we should merely like to call the attention of the Dresden public to the circumstance that rarely has an artwork been embraced by the performers with so much piety and self-surrender as last night and in the antecedent rehearsals of 'Tannhäuser.' In particular the efforts of Hr. Tichatschek, who notoriously was influenced by nothing so little as by a predilection for the composer's personality, cannot be acknowledged gratefully enough; for, in the most unselfish devotion to the opera's welfare, he has triumphed over manifold attempts to hinder the representation."

Here, again, so little is the anonymous reporter a friend of Wagner's, that he deliberately goes out of his way to represent him as an object of dislike to both the King and Tichatschek. Thus was a double wound kept open, and through a paper belonging to the composer's own brother-in-law! At least the editor might have exercised the customary discretion, and blue-pencilled a line or two. But no: he gives publicity to yet a third gaucherie:—

"* There can seldom have been a worse démenti than that which has just befallen the Kasseler Zeitung. Quite in the spirit of the Freimüthige Sachsen-Zeitung (Nr. 403) it also rages against the representation of Richard Wagner's 'Tannhäuser' at the Court-theatre in Dresden, and accordingly allows itself to be thence addressed under date Oct. 24: 'Our court and higher aristocratic circles have been set in a certain commotion, these two days, by the report that a command was issued yesterday by His Majesty the King to set aside "for an indefinite period" Richard Wagner's opera "Tannhäuser," which was to have been remounted tomorrow with great parade. People outside would surely find it hardly credible that the management of His Majesty's theatre should attempt to get up again with great éclat an opera of Wagner's, a May-rebel who has renounced every feeling of gratitude due to the high Royal House. Those better acquainted with the relations between our Court and Theatre, however, will find the attempt too explicable. Folk say that in the decision which His Majesty has taken, to the delight of all who love the Royal House, he has followed the advice of that statesman who many a time before has preserved the honour of Saxony and the Throne on a larger scale.' Well: the whole story is an invention, for the representation of 'Tannhäuser' has taken place, and will take place again."

It is not an engaging picture, this reproduction by the *D. A. Z.* of the intrigues of high and low in Dresden, and we may congratulate our hero on being well beyond that city's walls. However conflicting the rumours, there is no smoke without fire, and there can be little doubt that our old adversary von Beust was the Loge of the situation; for the *Anzeiger* mentioned in the first report, and the *Freimüthige* in the third, were both of them his tools (see vol. ii, 411 and 420-1). Evidently there *had* been a battle royal at court; perhaps ending in a compromise whereby the opera was to be revived indeed, but withdrawn after five performances.—W. A. E.

Page 406. CONTEMPLATED GUIDE TO LOHENGRIN.—That a work of a kindred nature to the "Address on the performing of Tannhäuser" was at one time under consideration for *Lohengrin*, we may conclude from the following passages in Wagner's correspondence of this period:—

"Be so good as to return me my Guide to the performing of Lohengrin, which I sent you from Thun in the summer of 1850"—he writes to Liszt Sept. 12, '52—"I am particularly anxious to have my beautiful hand-drawings for the scenery, as I intend to get accurate scenic plans prepared according to my special directions (*nach meiner besonderen Angabe*) by a Dresden friend, or through his mediation, so as to hold them in readiness in case the theatres want to tackle Lohengrin in the future. Should the Weimar Intendance, or anybody else, set any store on the retention of my former originals, they shall faithfully return to his or their possession." Liszt's reply (Oct. 7) shews that the 'collector' had begun his deadly work thus early: "Down to the present I have been unable to discover your Lohengrin drawings and instructions [note the last expression]; I gave them to Genast at the time, and they went the round of our theatre. If possible, I will send them on to you, but cannot promise for certain, since the autograph-craze may have been carried so far that I cannot get them back again."

Apparently neither the drawings nor the "instructions" of 1850 were recovered, for Wagner tells F. Heine quite at the end of 1852, "I cannot write without thoroughly reciprocating your amiable solicitude for Lohengrin. Again I see from your letter [*re* a Weimar performance] that I must once more express my wishes as to the mounting of Lohengrin very distinctly and circumstantially, before I can be sure of not being misunderstood on any point. For that I shall even have to call my—unfortunately somewhat neglected—drawing-talent into requisition. In any case I see a task before me that cannot be got through off-hand; so I shall reserve it till I have finished my immediate one [the fair-copying and proof-revising of the *Ring* poem]. Luckily it is not pressing, as I have withdrawn Lohengrin everywhere for this winter, only to open the door to it in the next. Instead, they will now give the 'Flying Dutchman' at Schwerin and Breslau. Over the work we *both* will then do, I'm rejoicing already: something decent shall be the outcome. You've already given me uncommon pleasure by your willingness to undertake it, as also by your preliminary suggestions (*vorläufigen Angaben*). You shall receive the *pianoforte-score* from me at the same time as my sketches: I have a copy on purpose for you. Whether one will be able to induce Härtels to publish the scenarium, I doubt: I suppose I shall have to pay the cost myself; but it can't be helped." The mention of the pfte-score (italicised in the original) should be borne in mind, as we shall find that score referred-to in Heine's "Note," to be presently adduced; from the sequel it would appear that Wagner meant to annotate a special copy of the pfte-score with minute additional instructions—probably to be collected afterwards in the form of a separate pamphlet—

but never got beyond the few remarks embodied in the "Note" aforesaid.

Feb. 3, 1853, he again tells F. Heine, "I shall soon set to the Lohengrin-work now, and send it you with the pfte-score." March 9, once more: "I have a terrible number of letters to write, and to people who are not so considerate as you and Fischer. But I will soon get to the Lohengrin-work: Härtels will publish it—provided the thing be made easy for them. Then, together with the pfte-score, I will also send you my completed new big poem ('der Ring des Nibelungen')." Wagner's new drawings, with a jotting or two in the pfte-score, must have been executed soon after this date, and despatched about the middle of April; for his next published letter to Heine, of April 30, refers to an inquiry of the latter's as to why only *one* copy of the *Ring* poem had come, and was it for him or for Fischer? In the interval he had written Liszt, March 30: "No paper thing can avail me any longer; and all my commerce with the world is nothing but on paper now.—What could avail me?—My nights are mostly sleepless—tired and wretched I rise from bed, to see before me a day that is to bring me *not one* joy" (applying to himself the words of Goethe's Faust). Such a mood will easily account for his having reduced his part of the "Lohengrin-work" to the barest necessities; a psychological analysis of the hero and heroine's characters from the practical standpoint of the *performer* was not to be expected in this frame of mind. April 30, moreover, when the last-mentioned letter to Heine is written, Wagner is "up to his ears" in preparations for his own music-festival at Zurich, and his concern for their joint product has fallen to the second plane: "For your readiness to occupy yourself with the Lohengrin-work, in spite of your sufferings, I thank you most heartily. Good—if you can manage it soon; but if a thing won't go, one mustn't force it."

Poor Heine was suffering with his eyes, and appears to have been unable to direct his pencil even so late as next June, so that he has had to employ some hack draughtsman to make copies of the *Tannhäuser* costume-drawings etc. (compare letter of June 10 to him with that of June 15 to Fischer). July 1 Wagner asks Fischer, "When shall I hear anything more from Heine?" and July 11, "How goes it with Heine's eyes? Is he working at Lohengrin? It would be well if that job were finished. But he's not to grind himself for that"; and yet again on the 27th, "What's Heine doing?" Hereabout good Heine seems to have set to work, as Wagner writes Fischer, Aug. 17: "A thousand kind regards to Heine. He is not to worry himself and his eyes so. The main point for me is a good clear plan [or "specification"—*eine gute fassliche Angabe*] of the scenery and its setting up."

That is the last we hear of the "Lohengrin-work" till January 1854,

by which time it has already been published. Meanwhile Wagner has begun and completed the music of *Rheingold* (save for its scoring), and any idea he may have formerly entertained of writing a *Lohengrin*-brochure would naturally be discarded. Unfortunately, too, an intervening letter to Heine, perhaps more than one, is missing, and we thus are possibly deprived of some valuable hints about the mounting; for that of Jan. 19, 1854, begins with an inquiry as to the cause of Heine's late silence: "Have you taken anything ill of me? My last comments on your remarks [or "my last notes to your communications"—*meine letzten Bemerkungen zu Deinen Mittheilungen*] about the scenarium for Lohengrin, by chance? I'm almost obliged to believe it, from the fact that these *scenische Angaben* have been entirely omitted from the little work that has appeared. To be sure, you were annoyed with me, and thought to yourself, 'If he knows better, let him do it himself.' Am I right? If so, you were wrong!—Well, I'll say no more about it, for perhaps I'm under a mistake with the whole suspicion, a very painful one to me!—Disabuse me soon.—"

Of the last dash I will take advantage to inquire what is really meant by these "*scenische Angaben*." At first sight, and if we are to take the whole letter as written *without interruption*, it would appear that Heine had deprived us of a second chance of coming by a schedule of "scenic instructions," such as had once been supplied to Liszt for Weimar. But that word *Angabe* is somewhat elastic, and already has been employed by Wagner three, if not four times over (*vid. sup.*) in a sense that points to a draughtsman's "design"—one of the special meanings assigned to it in the dictionary. Already, then, there is a possibility that "*diese scenische Angaben*" is to be interpreted as "these designs for the scenery," the *diese* being justified by a reference to the "scenarium" in the last sentence. The designs for the scenery itself "entirely omitted from the little work that had just appeared"?—you ask incredulously—What else can it have contained?—Have a little patience with my answer, as anything connected with the history of *Lohengrin* may be presumed to be of general interest.

Though I have never seen it advertised in any book- or music-seller's catalogue, this "little work" is still obtainable from Messrs Breitkopf und Härtel, its publishers, and well worth securing by the "collector" as a bibliographic rarity, notwithstanding that the price is rather high. The title on the loose paper cover (large 4°) is *Decorative und costümliche Scenirung der Oper: Lohengrin von Richard Wagner. In Auftrag des Dichters entworfen von Ferdinand Heine*—i.e. "Scenery and costumes for Richard Wagner's opera Lohengrin. Designed, on the poet's authority, by Ferdinand Heine." The contents comprise a) six lithographic plates, each presenting two designs for costumes—

namely I. König Heinrich; II. Elsa, act ii; III. Lohengrin, act i, with swan (not dove) on helmet; IV. Lohengrin, act ii; V. and VI. Talramund (*sic*), acts i and ii; VII. Ortrud; VIII. a Ritter; IX. the Herald; X. a Reichsfürst; XI. the King's Body-guard; XII. Serving-women and Folk (one figure)—b) three wood-cut plates of scenery, each presenting outline drawings of the elevation and ground-plan for the 'set' of its respective act (act iii having also a skeleton outline printed in *red*), with *letter-press instructions* to the stage-manager at the foot—c) a four-page printed sheet of descriptions of the costumes, ending with the "Notiz" already referred to.

Now, all these contents are loose in the cover, and as a different process would be needed for the printing of each of the three categories *a*, *b*, and *c*, it is possible that Wagner had received from Härtels only *a* and *c* by the time the above lines were written, also that he hastily imagined that to be an end of it. The possibility becomes almost a certainty when we recall the expression "If he knows better, let him do it himself"; and all I can say is, that he must have been in a surprisingly amiable frame of mind, not to have flown into a towering passion. So, if we suppose the postman to arrive while Wagner is still at his writing-desk—as mostly happened—our problem will practically solve itself; for the letter proceeds, from the point where I dropped it: "The scenarium I have now received [also from the publishers?]: you have done your work beautifully—eh! in many ways too beautifully [for Heine's eyesight?]. I owe you so many thanks for it, that I should be quite inconsolable if I had to suppose I had recompensed your friendly pains by wounding you. Do set my mind at ease as to this!—Everything, as said, is completely after my wish. Where you have departed a little from me in the scenery—as in the lay of the river in act i—I quite recognise that you have corrected me aright," and so on. Wherefore, instead of Wagner's "scenic specifications" having been omitted from the little work, as a first glance at this letter suggested, we may take it that most of the letter-press explanations on the plates which I have classed as *b* are virtually his own "comments."

I will now give an account of the contents of the "little work," so far as is necessary to shew Wagner's share in it. The six lithographed sheets of costumes, which I have classed as *a*, need not detain us, as the draughtsman himself would naturally be chiefly responsible for them. Presumably they are more or less historically correct, and we all are fairly familiar with their form, through actual experience at most opera-houses; whereas a word or two will be devoted to the proposed scheme of colour when we arrive at *c*.

The plates of scenery (*b*) afford more interest, especially as they are undoubtedly based on Wagner's own rough sketches. That he knew how to draw a clear and well-proportioned ground-plan, is

evidenced by the little sketch for act ii of *Die Meistersinger* reproduced in the "Bayreuth Number" of *Die Musik* (1902) from the master's MS. draft of 1845. The general contours of these scenes we may therefore attribute to Wagner himself; and, with one exception (the Bridal chamber), they have been pretty faithfully followed by the average scene-painter, though at Bayreuth alone have I seen them more closely adhered to. There are a few special points, though, to claim our attention :—

To the plate for act i a note is appended: "It is scarcely needful to remark that none of these scenic designs pretend to accuracy either of landscape or architecture, but simply establish the general arrangement, and, with respect to the architecture, merely suggest its style." Among other directions on this plate, the stage-manager is instructed to have the front reach of the river "covered with canvas painted to resemble water, on which the boat whereon Lohengrin stands is to describe a curve from the right till it arrives at the landing-place," this curve being dotted on the ground-plan to cover $\frac{3}{4}$ of a long ellipse. With regard to act ii, the architecture of the Kemenate and Palace is an earlier Romanesque than that we are accustomed to; and the scaffolding, or "Appareille" (as Heine terms it), by which the ladies of Elsa's suite descend to the stage proper, is made to slope *gradually* down from the semicircular balcony in front of her chamber till the *low* flight of steps in front of the Palace is reached. In act iii we have an arrangement of the Bridal-chamber precisely similar to that since carried out at Bayreuth, the four-poster state-bed at the back of the square inner room, with its little square stools at each side of the foot, and on either hand a door for entry and exit of the two component parts of the procession. From the line of the first wing springs a wide arch supported by pilasters; to the right of this archway a rounded niche with window, beneath it the "resting-couch"; to the left of the archway a flat wall with door for Telramund's entry. All this is familiar enough. But a longish note describes the method of the change of scene; a note worth quoting in part, as evincing the traditional aversion to cutting the stage completely off while an act is in progress: "The whole scenery from the first act is already set behind the Bridal chamber, as indicated by the red lines on the ground-plan. The curtain of the central arch is drawn [while the back portion of the chamber is removed]. . . . At the signal, the arch and curtain together with the front side walls are hoisted up, the couch is drawn off, and only the foremost mound of earth from the first scene needs to be pushed forward, left, from the first coulisse." Surely this unnecessarily clumsy device must be assigned to a misunderstanding of Heine's, for we know how careful Wagner had just shewn himself in his *Tannhäuser* Guide to guard against any such assault on dramatic illusion. The curtain, of course

(as proved by *all* the scores), was meant by him to conceal the *whole* stage, as in act i of *Siegfried's Tod* (1848) and subsequently in act iii of the *Meistersinger*.

And now for *c*, the sheet of printed matter accompanying these plates of designs. Its greater part is devoted to a description of the costumes, and it is almost amusing to find F. Heine going into minute details as to the best mode of making stage suits of mail, also suggesting that "the long mantles of the Princes of the realm, the half-round mantles and short tunics of the Knights, ladies' dresses etc.," may be borrowed from the *Tannhäuser* wardrobe at theatres where that opera has already been mounted (In the days of a certain Covent Garden lessee they were borrowed from a Drury Lane pantomime). The colour-scheme is of interest, however; and here we may certainly detect the eye of Richard Wagner. Apart from the King,* the principal characters all incline to a harmony of sky-blue and violet: Elsa's tunic is to be pale blue, the lining of her silver mantle violet (act ii); Lohengrin's helmet-veil and first sword-sheath pale blue, his gold mantle of act ii lined with pale blue and bordered with violet sewn with silver and pearls; Telramund has stripes of gold and pale blue on a tabard of violet velvet; Ortrud's tunic of black velvet is caught up with ropes and pendants of pale blue over a skirt of violet silk; Gottfried's tunic is white with gold and pale blue; finally the pages have violet tights, white merino tunics with orange and silver stripes, and light blue plastrons in the form of a shield bearing a gold Brabantian lion. It used to be deemed a heinous crime to combine two colours so near each other in the scale as blue and violet, but Wagner knew better, evidently having noted the chromatic value of their combination in the larkspur, the pansy, the lupin and cornflower.

The most momentous portion of this sheet of printed matter has yet to come. With Heine's suggestion about the borrowing of *Tannhäuser* garments for *Lohengrin*, his personal share of the task is done. He draws a line to mark it off, and adds a long "*NOTIZ, zur Nachachtung bei der Scenirung*," or "NOTICE, to be observed in the staging" of the opera. This I shall quote in full, as its repeated references to "the poet's intention" make it clear that the Notice, though signed "F. H.," is simply a compilation of scattered notes derived in part from Wagner's (missing) letters to him, in part from that aforesaid copy of the pfte-score :—

"With regard to the disposition of the stage, the poet has added [i.e. now adds] to his directions contained in the score the following

* *His* costume is ordered by Heine to be made of merino, though his vassals (Telramund and Ortrud) wear silks and velvet! In those days the richness of the dress was evidently determined by the length of the singing part.

supplementary remarks and explanations, which he commends to the precisest observance of stage-managers and performers.

"The whole scenic arrangement must depart entirely from our traditional stage usage. Thus the wedding procession in the 2nd act, e.g., must be no sort of ceremonial march; nothing must remind us of a ceremonial arrangement; everything must seem to take shape of itself, and appear as unforced as possible. The *warriors* appear with spears and shields only in the last act, as if armed for the campaign; in the first and second, on the contrary, they are mingled with the people, themselves but onlookers. The herald's proclamation suffices to keep the lists free of all crowding; in the case of the wedding-train, the childlike cry of lads, who form the escort of the bride, suffices for all to retreat before them gladly and of their own accord. Therefore [*Heine's* non sequitur?] besides the 4 *singing pages* there must be as many more of them, according to the size of the stage, as is necessary to form a loose file from the porch of the Palace to that of the Minster. Even the Brabantian nobles, who had not heeded the first call, make willing way for this personal advance.

"The music of the wedding-train must certainly ["*muss ja*" is Wagner all over] remain unabridged, and simply be filled out by seemingly-spontaneous grouping and movement; principally, however, by sympathetic by-play of all concerned. About 3 to 4 bars after its commencement (p. 128 of the pianoforte score) the suite of ladies enters from the first coulisse, *above* on the balcony B, passing round the Kemenate and down the slanting scaffold C ["*Appareille*"—supposed to be a temporary erection?]. Midway in this train appears Elsa, immediately in front of Ortrud, coming out of the doorway of her apartment above. When she has descended the scaffold to the point where it becomes broader in its curve at the back, the two ladies in front of her step back a little, so that thenceforward they walk *beside* Elsa. The other ladies also, who could only walk singly on the round balcony, arrange themselves in pairs as soon as the scaffold grows wider. Ortrud walks with bowed head about 4 or 5 paces *behind* Elsa, and at an equal distance *in advance of* the second half of the ladies; consequently, alone. The movement of the train must so be calculated that Elsa has arrived at the top middle-step in front of the Palace precisely with the first bar on p. 130 of the pfte-score, 'Sie naht, die Engelgleiche!' Here she pauses and supports herself against one of the ladies standing by her, as if overcome with glad emotion; Ortrud, who is standing sideways, freely exposed to view, draws herself proudly up *an instant*, and casts a furtive glance at Elsa, then lapses into her former humble pose again. This group remains stationary for about 8 bars, and only at the '*Heil dir!*' does Elsa recover herself and begin slowly to descend the

steps and advance towards the Minster, stopping several times en route to answer with naïve cordiality the greetings of individuals to the right and left; so that, not only is the music quite filled out, but the poet's object is attained—namely, no marching procession, but continuous *action* illustrating (*versinnlichend*) Elsa's rich and weighty progress to the altar; a progress in which Elsa's dumb-show is of great importance, and must rivet the whole attention.

"Afterwards, when the King and Lohengrin with their retinue have descended the middle steps of the Palace and advanced towards the front, the people gradually and quietly draw back and mount the now vacant scaffold; so that the wedding-suite obtains more room on the stage, while the groups of people, standing higher, fill the background picturesquely up.

"To assist the effect of the very simple scenery in act 2, the following should be observed with regard to its lighting:—At the beginning of the act, as indicated, night; merely the windows of the palace lit, which also are darkened at the first bars of p. 81 pfte-score. Thenceforth dark night to the last half of page 102, where the first flush of dawn becomes visible on the horizon; gradually it waxes, and when *serving-men* open the tower-door to admit the populace, a brighter gleam strikes through this gateway; the battlements begin to redden, whereas the courtyard itself still lies in gloom that only gradually yields place to day. Not until the aforesaid passage p. 130 do the full rays of the rising sun fall through the gateway on the group of Elsa and her ladies in front of the palace portal. Later, p. 133, the foreground of the stage is also lighted by the sun, whereas the middle space between the 4th and 5th coulisses remains but *half* lit, as if in the shadow of the high building [the Minster]. In this way the principal personages will stand in relief from the middle-distance, and the latter again from the background, yet without debasement to a forced or unnatural effect.

F. H."

That ends the tiny manifesto, and leaves us with a craving for more. Full as are the stage-directions in the *Lohengrin* score, the account above-given of the "wedding-train" not only shews what an admirable and resourceful stage-manager Richard Wagner must have made, but throws fresh light on two of the principal characters. It is a thousand pities that he was not in the humour to pursue the theme.

He would have had to write several volumes on *Lohengrin*, however, to curb the over-elaboration practised on some stages nowadays; volumes of interdictions. For instance, some three years back, in the last of the years that began with 18', I happened on a so-called "model-performance" of *Lohengrin* at the Munich Court-theatre—before the new Prinz-Regententheater was built. Some five years

previously the work had been remounted regardless of expense, notoriously with a view to eclipse the coming first Bayreuth performance, and much had been trumpeted of the "correctness" of its staging. Well, in the half-light of the opening portion of act ii I had been much puzzled by an upright projection from the balcony in front of Elsa's chamber; as the light grew stronger, its form became better defined, an irregular cross of stone; Elsa comes out to join the procession, pauses on the threshold, and kneels for the duration of one minute before—a crucifix! Had it been a figure of the Madonna, it might have been forgiven; but a crucifix to stand facing the maiden's window, for her to pay her daily devotions to in public! And a crucifix to arrest the progress of a wedding-train! It was a case of an Israelite director toying with symbols of the Christian faith for sake of a cheap theatrical effect. Five years had this wilful interpolation been permitted already, and, for all I know, it may be perpetrated to this day; yet there are those who call Wagner fretful because he did not profess unbounded gratitude for the ordinary German renderings of his works! What would Raphael or Michael Angelo have said, had a similar offence been committed against one of their frescoes? "If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in a dry?"—W. A. E.

INDEX TO VOLUME III.

In this index figures denoting the tens and hundreds are not *repeated* for one and the same reference, excepting where the numerals run into a fresh line of type: thus

Wotan, 240, 9, 52, 300, 26, will stand for
Wotan, 240, 249, 252, 300, 326, and so on.

References to footnotes bear the letter *n* after the numeral.

N.B. In German names K and C are often interchangeable.

A.

Aarau, 292, 309.
Abendpost, Berlin, 66.
"Abendstern, Zum," Zurich, 48.
Abendzeitung articles, 34, 63-4*n*, 127*n*, 393*n*.
Abiger, bass, 502.
Abt, Franz, 52, 6, 78, 277, 82, 7, 302-3, 15.
"Acacia," Zurich, 17.
Achilleus, 28, 39, (346), 479.
Actors and Singers, 23, 39, 51-8, 103-10, 42-3, 51-63, 224, 6-7, 37, 238, 41, 53, 6, 61, 307-9, 13-7, 30, 355, 60-71, 423, 86, 502, 11-3.
"Adam," 433.
Æschylus, 14, 123, 252, 328.
Aghte, Frl., 54, 196*n*; see Milde.
Agoult, Comtesse d', 179.
Alberich, 240, 52, 332, 418, 20, 2, 4, 435, 42, 52: scene with Hagen, 440, 1; Wanderer, 443, 4, 6-7.
Albisbrunn, 148, 244-51, 64, 7, 354, 498.
Alexandre (harmonium), 185.
Allg. Musik-Ztg, 275, 93.
Allgemeine Zeitung, Augsburg, 37, 60-1, 199, 475.
Alps, 10, 48, 168*n*, 322, 45-50, 413, 430.
Altenburg, Weimar, 183-5, 91, 203, 212*n*, 8, 20, 470, 82; "blue room," 185-6.
Ambros, A. W., 189.
America, 9-10, 274, 5, 472.
Andalusia, 320.
Anders, E., 35, 79.
Antigone, 121*n*, 47*n*.
Antilles, 320.
Anton, King of Saxony, 163-4.
Anzeiger, Dresden, 501, 4.
Apollo, 15-6.
Architect, the, 22, 149, 60, 277, 472-475, 509; cf. 140.
Aria, 103-6, 14, 41, 476.
Arnold, Matthew, 409.
Art and Life, 13-6, 23, 81-90, 116-9, 122, 6, 35-6, 8, 41, 3-4, 52, 5, 70, 177, 235, 53, 66, 73, 99, 301, 20, 360, 408, 10, 6-7, 27, 9, 33, 73-5, 480, 98, 506.
Art and Politics, 12-4, 6, 29, 36, 66, 82, 5-6, 114, 20, 1, 44, 6, 55, 77, 352, 92, 7-400, 3, 47, 81, 4, 501-4.
Art-lottery, 158, 60.
Athenæum, 52, 500.
Athens, 14, 59, 475.
Auber, 95, 162: *Fra Diavolo*, 75; *Lac des Fées*, 386; *Masaniello*, 76, 111.
Augsburg *Allg.*, see *Allg.*
Augusta, Kaiserin, 384*n*.
Austria, 146*n*, 276, 390,
Avenarius, Cäcilie (Wagner's sister), 322; Eduard, 147, 73-4.

B.

Bach, 135, 339*n*, 90; foundation, 209*n*.
Baden rebellion, 12, 268.
Baedeker, 347.
Baer, horn-player, 280, 1, 92, 3.
Bakunin, 36, 268, 9, 87.
Ballenstedt festival, 339-42, 488.

Ballet, 29, 104*n*, 6, 51.
Bandsmen, 29, 65, 110, 43, 63-4, 279-83, 6-93, 309, 16, 40-1, 71, 95, 428*n*, 57-8.
Basle, 283, 92; "feast," 347.
Baumgartner, Wilhelm, 11, 233, 66, 278*n*, 9*n*, 87, 314; songs, 282*n*, 302-3.
Baumhauer, tenor, 64.
Baveno, 349.
Bayreuth, 24, 52, 158-60, 221, 6, 49, 253*n*, 9, 61, 78, 89, 423-4, 53, 509, 513.
Bayreuther Blätter, 28*n*, 253*n*, 64*n*, 274*n*, 337*n*, 9*n*, 42*n*, 59*n*, 65, 445*n*, 53.
Bayr. Taschen-Kalender, 372*n*.
Beaulieu-Marconnay (temporary Intendant at Weimar), 220, 55, 334.
Beck, first "Lohengrin," 51, 4, 7*n*, 196, 7.
Becker, C. F., 94.
Beethoven, 14, 26, 67, 266, 84, 9-91, 303-6, 421, 53, 77; eye-trouble, 410*n*; pfte, 185; "sketching," 112-3, cf. 291, 304-5.
Beethoven's: Choral Fantasia, 341; *Coriol.* ov., 289-91, 303; *Egmont* music, 286-9; *Fidelio*, 78, 112*n*, 299; Septet, 280; Symphonies, 26, 105, 35, 40, 66, 288-9, 93*n*, 419, 86—*Eroica*, 280-1; C minor, 280, 2, 9-90; Pastoral, 282, 92, 3; Seventh, 32, 277-9, 81; Eighth, 282, 6-9; Ninth, 118, 64, 287, 8, 306, 41—creation of, 410, contract with Lond. Philh., 255.
Belgium, 474, see Brussels.
Bellini, 111*n*; *Norma*, 75, 370, 454.
Belloni, G., 5-8, 26, 33, 41, 79*n*, 393-4, 413, 73; -anism, 212-3, 315.
Berlin, 314, 39, 40, 51-2; Court-theatre, 260-1, 352, 6, see *Tann.*
Berliner Musikzeitung, 63*n*.
Berlioz, 5, 191, 304, 453; on Wagner, 470-1; Wagner on, 35, 112-4, 135, 336-7; *Cellini*, 54*n*, 335-8; *Harold*, 190, 6, 341; *Troyens*, 482.
Bernburg, Duke of Anhalt-, 339.
Berne, 42, 265*n*, 83, 472; *Bund*, 315, 499.
Bernese Oberland, 249, 347.
Beust, Ct Ferd. v., 248, (362, 97, 9, 503), 504.
Bible, The, 94, 418, 90.
Bieberstein, H. Marschall von, 272, 275.
Biebrich (Rhine), 265*n*.
Bischoff (Cologne), 372.
Blum, Robert, 498.
Boehme, F. M., 94.
Böhm, Leopold, 287*n*, 8, 92, 309.
Boieldieu, *Dame blanche*, 65, 77; *Jean de Paris*, 76.
Bölken, tenor, 313.
Bollier, Swiss magistrate, 265*n*.
Bordeaux, W. at, 40-1, 150, 273*n*.
Bote und Bock, 353.
Bredo, Frl., sopr., 502.
Breitkopf und Härtel, 68*n*, 168, 72-6, 197, 234, 42, 343, 73, 7-8, 88, 491, 501, 5-8.
Brendel, Franz, 24, 92-4, 165, 6, 9*n*, 191, 300, 6, 41, 8, 63, 74, 7, 8, (484), 503.
Breslau, 356, see *Tann.*
Broadwood, Beethoven's, 185.
Brockhaus, pub. firm, 95*n*, 157*n*, 201*n*, 12, 3, 5, 399. See *D. Allg.*
Brockhaus, F., 265, 372, 504.
,, Hermann, 428*n*.
Brunnen, 167.
Brünnhilde, 118, 21*n*, 229, 38, 9, 52, 254, 326, 9, 30, 425, 36, 40-55, 495.
Brussels theatre, 80.
Buddha, 181.
"Bühnenfestspiel," 414.
Bülow, Eduard von, 66-8, 71, 3; Wagner writes to, 70, 2-3.
Bülow, Francisca (his wife), 45, 52, 66-73, 7, 341; Wagner writes to, 68-70.
Bülow, Hans Guido v. (their son), 25, 31, 45, 52, 4*n*, 6-7, 65-78, 86*n*, 181, 5, 7*n*, 98*n*, 215, 6, 8-20, 242, 79, 81, 300*n*, 39-41, 54, 61, 382*n*, 95, 464, 92; articles by, 66, 169*n*, 335*n*, 41, 403*n*; transl. *Loh.* anal., 206; writes for Liszt to W., 173*n*, 256, 334*n*, 8*n*, 41, 2*n*, 61, 483; *Cæsar* and *Romeo* overtures, 291*n*.
Bünau, von, 497.
Bunke, Agnes, sopr., 502, 3.
"Burn the score," 227-30, 61, 360, 449.
Byron, 270.

C.

Caccini, 104.
Caesmann, L, (307-8), 312.
Cæsar, Julius, Bülow's overture, 291*n*.
Calderon, 119.

Calumnies, 9*n*, 10, 29, 76, 273-5, 484.
Campe, pub., 426.
Carlyle, Thomas, 433.
Carolyne, see Wittgenstein.
"Carolyszt," 157, 90-1, 200-1, 70*n*.
Cassel: theatre, 352, 9*n*, 406; Zeitung, 504.
Chamberlain, H. S., 13, 44*n*, 164, 332.
Chamounix, 350.
Chelard, ex-Kapellmeister, Weimar, 218.
Cherubini, 106, 340; *Deux Journées*, 76, 162.
Chopin, Vie de, 189, 90, 1, 4, 200, 209*n*.
Choral unions, 10, 227, 64*n*, 79*n*, 83, 309, 38-40, 7.
Chorley, H. F., 27, 52.
Chorus, 114, 23, 31, 51, 227, 328, 368, 422-3, 36, 40, 54, cf. 476, 502.
Ciccarelli, 280*n*.
Circulation, 53, 9, 61, 3, 79-80, 94, 158, 74, 213, 78-9*n*, 310, 1*n*, 6, 39, 343, 51-408, 11, 34, 59-60, 2, 71, 475, 89, 500-1, 5.
Cleopatra's pearl, 229.
Coburg, Ernst II. Duke of, 49.
Cologne, 372; theatre, 358.
Coloratura, 104, 10, 4, 314, 499.
"Comic opera," 83, 243, cf. 238, 450.
Communism, artistic and practical, 14, 5, 22-4, 30, 73, 84-7, 144, 56, 161-2, 76-7, 481, 4.
Conradi, bass, 502.
Conversationslexikon, 95.
Cornelius, Peter (painter), 182, 266.
,, ,, *Barber of Bagdad*, 218*n*.
Corrodi, Frln, 280*n*.
Corsi, Jacopo, 104.
Cossmann, Bernhard, 49.
Critic, the professional, 95-7, 100-4, 111, 2, 4, 8, 23, 31, 40, 70-1, 99, 274, 98, 300-1, 4, 14, 27, 8, 30, 40, 407, 75-7, 80, 7, 92-4, 6, 7, 503.
Critical spite or buffoonery, 24, 61, 2, 87, 94, 9, 108, 71, 294, 315-7, 40, 351-2, 72, 92, 400, 84, 501-4. See also Calumnies.
Criticisms, friendly, 60-3, 5, 99, 165-166, 270, 7-9, 87, 93-4, 312-6, 91, 403-4, 70-2, 83-9, 91-2, 4, 9.
Cuts, 152. See *Loh.*; *Tann.*

D.

Daland (*Holl.*), 313, 6-7.
"Daniel Stern," 179.
Dante diorama, 188.
Dantzig theatre, 359.
Darmstadt, 372; theatre, 359*n*.
Daumer, G. F., 426, 8*n*.
David, Ferd. (violinist), 94, 197.
Denmark, 431.
Dessau, 164, 340.
Deutsche Allg. Ztg, 62, 199, 399, 401, 497-8, 501-4.
Deutsche Rundschau, 430*n*.
Deutsches Museum, 157.
Devrient, Ed., 146.
Dietsch, P. L. P., *Vaisseau Fantôme*, 38, 470.
Dingelstedt, Franz, 62, 389; *Loh.* review, 53, 5, 60-1, 99, 143, 475-7; prologue, 49, 52, 7, 477.
Dinger, Dr Hugo, 47*n*.
Dog, see Peps.
Domo d'Ossola, 347, 9, 50.
Donizetti, 111*n*, 62: *Belisario*, 370; *Fille du Rég.*, 74; *Maria Padilla*, 280*n*.
Dorn, H., 384, 6.
Dowdeswell, Charles, 428*n*.
Dragon (*Nibel*), see Wurm.
Drama, Evolution of Wagnerian, 15, 22, 4, 39, 48, 53, 5, 8-9, 61-3, 96, 100-1, 4-9, 18-44, 59, 68-70, 7, 237, 40-4, 50-3, 7-8, 83, 309-10, 3, 318, 28-9, 70, 3, 408, 21, 2, 46, 450-1, 3, 5, 75, 8, 85-7, 9, 92-5, 9, 511.
Dresden, 3, 9, 10, 2, 29, 48, 62, 70, 76, 88, 108, 67, 264, 83, 90, 314, 337*n*, 64, 432, 72-3, 504.
Dresden Court-theatre, 3, 54, 88, 164, 167, 260-1, 81, 311, 51-3, 6, 60-1, 390, 5-403, 57-60, 70, 2, 5, 501-4; Historical Concert, 248, 396*n*.
Dresden Insurrection, 3, 7, 9, 12, 29, 36, 176, 247-9, 72, 382*n*, 97, 9, 469-70, (484), 493, 7-9, 502-4.
Dürer, Albrecht, 158.
Düsseldorf, 275; theatre, 357, 8, 9*n*.

E.

Echo, Berlin, 341.
Eddas, 323, 33, 432; see Volsunga.
Education, 15, 59, 69, 71, 8*n*, 84, 90, 152, 5, 61, 233, cf. 346, 461.
Eidgenössische Zeitung, Zurich, 11, 64*n*, 5, 74, 149, 55, 278-9, 81, 7, 8, 293-4, 302, 12-6, 80, 93*n*, 473, 99.
Eilsen, 79*n*, 185, 92-4, 8*n*, 9, 200, 4, 208, 10-2, 6, 8-9, 33, 41, 3, 354*n*.
Eisenach, 469.

Elegante Welt, 170*n*.
Elgg, Lake of Zurich, 321, 427.
Eliot, George, 20.
Elisabeth (*Tann.*), 361, 8, 405, 502.
Elsa (*Loh.*), 121, 89*n*, 201-2, 406, 51, 491-2, 506, 9, 11-3; costume, 510.
Enge, see Zurich.
England, 27, 274, 472; art in, 473-5. See London.
Erda, 240, 300, 23, 419; in *Siegfried*, 443, 4, 6, 9.
Erfurt, 10, 197.
Erik (*Holl.*), 190, 309, 13.
Ernst, H. W., violinist, 393*n*.
Ettmüller, E. M. L., 271, 323, 419, 431.
Etymology, 124, 8-9, 301, 432, 3, 94.

F.

Fafner, 440*n*, 4; -motive, 243. See Giants.
Fasztlinger, Frau, 54, 6*n*.
Faulhorn, 347, 8.
Faust-overture, 310, 77, 417; perf. Weimar, 338-9, 42; re-scoring, 339*n*, cf. 370; as symphony, 450.
"Fear," 238, 425, 42, 5.
Feeling, *v.* Understanding, 120-41, 159, 369, 452, 85-7, 96; cf. 90, 328-329, 446, 76, 99.
Feen, Die, 352, 7, 60.
Felber, E., pub., 332*n*.
Festival scheme, (84-5, 155), 156*n*, 158-9, 76, 220, 6-31, 4, 49, 51-3, 258-62, 76, 83, 5, 318, 43, 408, 13, 414, 37.
Fétis père, 52, 391, 2.
Feuerbach, Ludwig, 19, 22, 4, 136, 146*n*, 268, 71, 301, 426, 8*n*, 9, 80, 5.
Fischer, Wilhelm, 17, 29, 37, 78, 167, 307, 8, 10, 1, 87, 96, 8, 400-3, 62, 464, 503, 6; nephew, 313, 7*n*.
Fliegende Holländer, Der, see H.
Flotow, F. von, 326*n*, 485: *Indra*, 386; *Martha*, 384.
Fluntern, behind Zurich, 265*n*, 321, 323, 56.
Föhn wind, 412, 3.
Folk, The, 22, 39, 90, 103, 9, 18, 490, 4.
Forman, Alfred, 327*n*, 32*n*.
Formazzathal, 347-9.
Formes, T., tenor, 356.
France, 29, 62, 150, 369, 474, 98. See Paris.
France musicale, 194.
Frankfort, 372; parlt, 146*n*, 275, 431; theatre, 195, see *Tann.*
Frankfurter Ztg, 469, 94*n*.
Franz, Robert, 191, 8, 303*n*, 40, 1, 459; on *Lohengrin*, 198*n*, 483-8, 92.
Frauenkirche, Dresden, 338*n*.
Freia, 418-9, 23-4, 6, 42.
Freimüthige Sachsen-Ztg, 498, 504.
French language, 32, 4, 142, 81, 91, 200, 354*n*, 93, 4, 461, 71.
French Opera, 28-9, 32, 4, 96, 111, 118, 50, 4, 62, 337, 485. See Paris.
Fricka, 71, 252, 326, 31-2, 418, 9*n*, 423, 4, 41.
Friedrich August II. of Saxony, 7, 164, 248, 362, 97, 9, 470, 98, 501-504.
Friedrich Rothbart, 491. See Liter.
Friedrich Wilhelm IV. of Prussia, 51, 380, 1, 3, 6.
Froh, 424, and Donner, 423.
Fromann, Alwina, 384*n*.

G.

Gaillard, Carl, 4, 63*n*.
Gazette musicale, 98*n*, 392, (470).
Gegenwart, 95-6, 9, 102.
Genast, Eduard, 49-60, (161), 225, 402, 69, 505; Dr Hans Merian-, 469.
Geneva, 316, 50, 7, 75.
Genius, 23-4, 67, 83, 6, 92, 108, 17, 159, 71, 228-9, 37, 60, 79, 81, 5, 9, 328, 410, 21, 32, 73, 9-81, 7-8, 99.
German language, 39, 89-90, 142, 503.
German Opera, 118.
German Theatre, 150, 4, 8-63, 76, 249, 51, 3, 61, 352-60, 9, 89, 407-408, 37, 71, 2, 7, 500, 4, 12-3.
Gesture, 22, 120, 32-6, 42-3, 301, 406, 23, 511-3.
Gewandhaus, Leipzig, 292, 374.
Giants (*Ring*), 252, 328, 417-9, 23, 5, 440*n*, 2.
Glarus alps, 322, 413, 30.
Glasenapp, C. F., v, 372*n*, 457*n*.
Gluck, 105-8, 17, 9, 26, 48, 62, 477: *Orfeo*, 50, 341; *Iph. in Aulis* revised by W., 50, 377.
Glümer, Clara von, 497-9.
Goethe, 105, 19, 57-9, 63, 85*n*; anniversary, 49, 158, 228, 475, 89; Stiftung, 49, 156-60, 84, 220: *Faust*, 52, 119, 332, 9*n*, 506; *Wilhelm Meister*, 85.
Goethe and Schiller, 91, 125*n*, 37, 178, 9, 92, 220.

Goetze, Weimar, 198*n*, 361.
Golther, Wolfgang, 323*n*.
GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG, see RING.
Gottfried (*Loh.*), 510.
Gottfried von Strassburg, 328.
Göttingen university, 430, 1*n*.
Gottschalg, Weimar organist, 470.
Grail, Holy, 195, 490-2, see Hoard.
Grane, Brynhild's horse, 454.
Greece as refuge, 46-7, 345, 493.
Greek antiquity, 14-5, 28, 82, 301, 474; Tragedy, 14, 59, 103-5, 19, 259, 70, 306-33.
Grenzboten, 12, 169*n*, 71*n*, 500.
Gries glacier, 347.
Grimm, Jakob, 333.
Gros Jean, 482.
Gröschner, Weimar flyman, 470.
Gross, Zurich, 12,
Grove's *Dict. of Music*, 391*n*.
Gunther and Gutrune, 440-2, 52.
Gutzkow, Karl, 52, 431.

H.

Hafiz, 270, 426-9, 48.
Hagen (*Ring*), 330, 440, 2, 53; "Watch," 441*n*.
Hagenbuch, Franz, 11, 277.
Hahn, Dr, 322.
Hähnel, 375.
Halle, 198, 340.
Hamburg, 354, 430-1; theatre, 26, 352, 9*n*, 73, 89, 95; *Theater-Ztg*, 400.
Hanover, 192; court-theatre, 359.
Hans Sachs, 8, 330, 429.
Hanssens, Chas. Junr, 80.
Härtel, Dr, 197, 373.
Haslithal, 347.
Hauptmann, Moritz, 94.
Haydn, 277.
Haynald, Cardinal, 482, 3.
Hebbel, poet, 431.
Hechingen band, 291.
Hegel, 20, 1, 181, 485.
Heim, Frau, sopr., 265.
Heine, Ferd., 29, 37, 167, 382, 401-403, 11, 505-12; *Letters to*, 226, 379*n*, 507, 10: son Wilhelm, 9-10.
Heine, Heinrich, 91, 431*n*: *Loreley*, 92, 477; *Reisebilder*, 477-8.
Heinze, 497.
Helvetia, 323.
Herder festival, 49, 52, 199*n*, 205*n*, 208, 10, 5, 28, 475, 88; *Prometheus*, Liszt's music, 49.
Hermann, Leipzig Cons., 94.
Hero, the, 329-30, 425-6, 64, 92.
Herwegh, Georg, 217, 68-71, 6, 87, 292, 4, 5, 9, 318, 22*n*, 46, 9, 93, 394, 430-5, 61.
Herzen, Alex. von, 268, (349).
Heubner, O. L., 7, 36, 497.
Heusser, Zurich, 288.
Hinze, Bruno, pub., 302*n*.
Hirzel, Frau, 48.
History and Drama, 95-6, 112, 5, 20, 121, cf. 291.
Hoard, The, 238, 52, 418, 22*n*, 3-4, 443, 6; and Grail, 207, 382, 407, 490-1.
Höfer, bass, 54.
Hoffmann, Johann, 389.
Hoffmann von Fallersleben, 431.
Holda, 299, 418, see Freia.
HOLLÄNDER, DER FLIEGENDE, 6, 8, 38, 91, 391*n*, 419, 50, 64, 70, 89:—
Cuts, 309.
Duet, act ii, 18, 313, 5, 41.
Excerpts at Zurich, 18, 279*n*.
Fees, 311*n*, 45.
Guide, see Literary.
Non-performances, 76, 310-1, 52-3, 374, 83.
Overture, 310, 1*n*, 4.
Performances:—Berlin and Dresden ('forties), 314-5, 52, 81; Breslau and Schwerin, 391, 462, 4, 505; Carlsruhe, Frankfort, Hanover, Prague and Wiesbaden, 391*n*; Weimar, 308, 11*n*, 2, 34, 44, 391*n*, 406, 65; Zurich, (76), 272*n*, 87, 307-18, 21, 3, 43-6, 356, 93*n*, 432, 45, 99.
Pfte scores, 316, cf. 279*n*.
Re-scoring, 309-11, cf. 370, 462, 4.
Sailors' Chorus, 279*n*, 312, 4, 96*n*.
Scenery, 307-9, 12, 3*n*, 4, 44.
Time-length, 313*n*.
Wagner appraises, 169, 308, 9, 60.
Homer, 123*n*, 81, 7, 270, 479*n*.
Hôtel Baur au Lac, 269, 76.
,, Erbprinz, Weimar, 57, (406).
,, de Russie, Berlin, 260.
,, ,, Saxe, Dresden, 260.
Hottingen, Zurich commune, 18, 264.
Howitz-Steinan, sopr., 502.
Hueffer, Dr Francis, 57*n*, 231*n*, 385*n*, 403*n*.
Hug's music-shop, Zurich, 279*n*.
Hülsen, von, Berlin Intdt, 380-8.
Hunding (*Ring*), 442.
Hutten, Ulrich von, 435.
Hymns, Church, 112, 25.
Hypatia, 186.

I.

Iduna, 418.
Illustrirte Zeitung, Leipzig, 198, 201*n*, 9-13, 34, 373, (484), 490.
Insurrection, see Dresden.
Internat. Musikgesellschaft, Zeitschrift der, 491, 4*n*, 5.
Italian language, 119, 42, 231, 348; Opera, 103-5, 18, 50, 348, 92. See Rossini.
Italy, 269, 320, 35, 45-50, 92.

J.

Jäckel, Dresden, 12.
Jacoby "family," Berlin, 388.
Jaffé, actor, 52.
Janin, Jules, 62*n*, 488.
Jena, 4, 5.
Jesus Christ, 15-6, 330*n*, see LITER.
Jews, 87-94, 111, 247, 68, 309, 93, 477, 90, 513.
Joachim, J., violinist, 94, 212.
Joan of Arc, 182.
Journal des Débats, 5, 62, 199, 205*n*, 215, 470-1, 88-90.

K.

Kalkbrenner, 289.
Kapellmeister Liszt, 179, 83, 96, 218.
Kapellmeister Wagner, 3-5, 12, 47*n*, 264, 78, 80*n*, 90*n*, 311, 8, 53, 95-9, 470, 2, 501, 2, 3.
Kapellmeisters, 374, 84, 90, 5, 401, 403, 502; "self-composing," 389.
Kaufhold, tenor, 313, 499.
Keller, Gottfried, 303.
Kieff, 182, 3.
Kietz, Ernst, 7, 35-6, 165, 321.
,, Gustav, 165, 7.
Klengel, Leipzig Cons., 94.
Klingsor, 491.
Köchly, Dr, 272.
Kolatschek, A., 37, 82, 146.
Königsberg theatre, 352, 9.
Königstein fortress, 36, (47), 497.
Konversationsblatt, Frankfort, 62.
Körnlein, 280*n*.
Kossuth, 498.
Kramer, W., Zurich dir., 64, 74, 6, 7, (150).
Krebs, K. A., cond., 395-6, 401-3.
Krelinger, bass, 502.
Kreuzthurm, Dresden, 249.
Kücken, F. W., songs, 279*n*.
Kullak, 281.
Kummer, F. and Julie (née Ritter), 42*n*, 321-2, 427, 58.
Kundry (*Pars.*), 449*n*.
Kürschner, Joseph, 35*n*.

L.

La Mara, 188.
Lachner, Franz, 298*n*, 389.
Lago Maggiore, 345, 9, 50.
Lasserre, Henri, 482.
Laube, Heinrich, 146, 70*n*, 269*n*.
Lausanne, 350.
Leathern hearts, 230, 84-5, 346, 85, 406.
Lehrs, F. S., 337*n*; death, 458, 9, 464.
Leipzig, 197, 467, 8: clique, 94, 169*n*, 292, 5, 305, 51-2, 72-8; Conservatorium, (71), 93-4, 376; Pauliner, 340; theatre, 310-1, 52, 353, 65, see *Tann.*
Leitmotiven, 56, 133-5, 9-40, 2-3, 203, 43, 452, 6, 86.
Lessing, 24, 492.
Lewald, Fanny, 491.
Lichnowsky, Prince Felix, 183.
Liebert, Weimar tenor, 405*n*.
LIEBESMAHL DER APOSTEL, 338-42.
LIEBESVERBOT, DAS, 77, 352, 60.
Liebig, Baron, 181, 460*n*.
Lindau, Lake Constance, 167.
Lindemann, Dr, 247*n*, 321, 414.
Lipinski, K. J., violinist, 395, 6.
LISZT, FRANZ, 4, 7, 9, 12-3, 8, 25-7, 32, 7-8, 41, 3-6, 50-63, 160, 4, 72-226, 9*n*, 31-7, 9, 41-3, 50, 4-60, 6, 268, 9, 77, 96, 304, 34-46, 72-3, 8-380, 3-7, 94-5, 400, 4-6, 16-7, 64-5, 470, 7, 83, 4, 93, 5, 500:—
Abbé, 182.
Correspondence with Wagner, 25, 33*n*, 8*n*, 53*n*, 7*n*, 173*n*, 4, 8, 195*n*, 205, 7-11, 4, 23*n*, 31, 3, 236, 43*n*, 334, 42-3, 57, 79, 83, 385, 428, 57, 61, 96*n*—*et passim*; letters in French, 26, 200, 4, 10, 218, 25, 31*n*, 42, 3.
"Friday," 183.
Literary works, 98*n*, 180, 5, 8-91:—*Bohémiens*, 189; *Chopin*, see C.; *Fondation-Goethe*, 156-7, 61, 194, 220; *Harold*, 190; *Holl.* art., 190, 201; *Loh. et Tann.* brochure, 200*n*, 1*n*, 7, 8, 12-8, 393-5, 471, 88, 90—*vid. inf.*
Lohengrin "analysis," 62, 146, 9, 190, 8-215, 34, 43, 373, 437, 484, 9-91.
Misunderstanding, 16, 26, 43-4, 201, 8-10, 2*n*, 4, 6-7, 32, 41-4,

LISZT, *continued*—
257, 9-60, 335-6, 61-2, 405, 96*n*, 505.
Mother and children, 7, 25, 179, 184, 91.
Mus. comp. :—*Dante* sym., 188 ; *Faust* chorus, 339*n* ; *Graner Messe*, 189 ; *Hungarian Rhaps.*, 194 ; *Macht der Musik*, 341 ; *Prometh.*, 49 ; *Tann.* ov. pfte, 281.
No visit to Wagner, 168, 212, 9, 241-2, 308, 43-4, 93*n*, 481.
Opera, 161, 88, 217.
Tannhäuser article, 5-6, 79, 190, 201*n*, 3*n*, 15-7, 470-2.
Will, 178, 218.
LITERARY WORKS, WAGNER'S, 13, 7, 19-25, 63, 81-2, 4*n*, 101, 24, 33*n*, 136, 45, 55, 7*n*, 8, 9, 63, 6, 72, 7, 225, 65, 71, 8, 301, 6, 51, 70, 1, 404, 21, 45, 70, 80-2, 4, 9 :—
Actors and Singers, 104*n*.
Art and Climate, 37, 82-3, cf. 320-321.
Art and Revolution, 6, 10, 2-7, 9, 20, 8, 66, 82, 155, 65, 493.
Art-work of the Future, 17-26, 8, 36, 81, 3, 6, 99, 105, 20*n*, 55, 165, 223, 301, 3*n*, 475, 80, 93, 9 ; fee for, 32, 4 ; R. Franz on, 484, 487 ; A. Stahr on, 25.
Artist and Publicity, 144, 228-9.
"Artist-hood of the Future" (projected), 19, 22-3, 83, 155.
Autobio. Sketch, 170*n*, 337*n*.
Beethoven, 113*n*, 303.
Communication, 101, 67-76, 250, 294, 342, 60, 3-4, 88*n*, 406, 29, 437*n*, 8, 48, 51 ; fee for, 172 ; history of, 63, 83, 6*n*, 121*n*, 63, 167-9, 72-6, 223*n*, 44, 61, 478-82, 496 ; Wagner on, 169, 75-7, 283, 392.
Conducting, 303.
Explanatory Programmes, 290-1, 302, 4-5 : *Coriol.*, 290-2, 303, 304*n* ; *Eroica*, 280-1, 9, 304*n*, 329*n* ; *Ninth Sym.*, 289, 304*n* ; *Tann.-overt.*, 217, 92-3, 5, 7-9, 369*n*, 427.
Flying Dutchman Guide, 308, 9, 317, 404, 6, 55.
Friedrich Rothbart, 17, 121, 3, 491.
German Art and Policy, 21.
Germanic Address, 13.
Goethe-Stiftung letter, 156-60, 237, 302*n*, 480.

LITERARY WORKS, *continued*—
Happy Evening, 281.
Jesus von Nazareth, 28, 78*n*, 330*n*.
Journalism contemplated, 6, 12-3, 16, 29, 36, 81-3, 97-8, cf. 147, 300, 2, 6, 63, 93*n*.
Judaism in Music, 87-94, 8, 116, 300, 6.
"Life of the Future" (projected), 83-6, 120, 479, 80.
Liszt's Symphonic poems, 291.
Musical Criticism, 300-3.
National Theatre, 99.
Nibelungen-Myth, 222*n*, 37, 40, 9, 251, 2, 323, 417-8, 37, 47.
Opera and Drama, 56*n*, 74, 82, 5, 86, 101-44, 51, 62-3, 203, 33, 71, 291, 303, 29, 423, 32, 52, 81 ; fee for, 146-7, 72 ; history of, 61, 3, 83, 8, 94-101, 20*n*, 45-8, 72, 6, 234, 65, 437, 79*n*, 80, 96 ; Wagner estimates, 100, 1, 45, 68, 9, 494.
Pilgrimage to Beethoven, 67.
Posthumous papers, 13, 28, 83, 4, 86, 101, 479, 80.
Preface, see *Communic.*
Schemes abandoned, 83-6, 163, 71-172, 223, 4, 479-80.
Spontini, 148-9.
State and Religion, 14, 84.
Tannhäuser Guide, 265*n*, 362-71, 376, 98, 402, 4, 5*n*, 7, 11, 502, 503, 9.
Theatre at Zurich, 19*n*, 64*n*, 149-156, 9, 60, 1, 234, 64*n*, 82, 303*n*, 480.
Wibelungen, 17-8, 66, 207, 490.
Wieland der Schmiedt, see W.
"*Zukunftsmusik*," 100, 40-2, 5.
Liverpool, 10.
Lobe, J. C., 62.
Locarno, 349.
Loge (*Ring*), 323, 419, 22-5.
LOHENGRIN, 13, 48, 121, 39, 40, 240, 1, 352, 451 :—
Criticisms, 60-2, 277 : F. Dingelstedt, 475-7 ; Robert Franz, 483-488, 92 ; Adolf Stahr, 491-6.
Cuts, 49, 57-60, 225, 6, 511.
Dedication to Liszt, 335, 42-3, 70, 379*n*, 500-1.
Dresses, 508, 10.
Fee for, 26, 50, 205.
Hero, 45-6, 51, 4, 195, 202, 366, 406, 91-4, 6, 506.
Liszt on, 16, 26, 7, 38, 44, 50, 2-3, 58, 195, 9-200, 10, 41, 383, 94, 402*n*, 88-9.

LOHENGRIN, *continued*—
Non-performances: Berlin, 383, 4, 385*n*; Brussels, 80, 208; Dresden, 17, 45, 88, 396-7, 400-3; Leipzig, 365, 72-3, 402; London, 27; Munich, 62; Paris, 37-8; Schwerin, 354, 91; Wiesbaden, 372.
Scenarium and Guide, 45-6, 9, 51, 57*n*, 402, 4, 6, 504-12.
Score: full, 16-7, 44-6, 51, 6, 167, 369*n*, 439, 93, 510, 2—pub., 197, 242, 335, 42-3, 73; pfte, 17, 167, 72-3, 234, 491, 505-6, 510-2.
Textbook, Weimar, 51, 6, 491, 3*n*; Berlin, 388*n*.
Time-length, 57, 9, 475.
Wagner estimates, 16, 44-5, 9, 58, 94, 169, 214, 44-5, 360, 493-6; longs to hear, 27, 48-51, 283-6, 393, 4, 439, 501.
Weimar production, 44-6, 8-63, 66, 80, 7, 92, 9, 142, (162), 193, 223-6, 77, 372, 475, 7, 93, 5-6, 500, 5; repetitions, 58-60, 193-8, 210, 3-4, 33, 6, 334-8, 42, 53, 361, 3, 5, 84, 400, 2, 6, 84-7, 496, 505.
London, 9, 89, 473-5: Opera, 242, 388*n*, 92—*Loh.* for, 27, at, 510; Philh., 255, 88.
Loretto, 181.
Lortzing, *Czar u. Zim.*, 75.
"Love," 41, 82, 5, 7, 8, 100, 18, 68, 171, 86, 91-2, 269, 99, 329, 416, 427-30, 48-50, 5, 91; renunciation of, 252, 418, 42-3.
Löwe, Zurich dir., 307, 9, 10*n*, 2, 6, 374.
Ludwig, K. F. W., prof., 271, 433.
Ludwig I., Bavaria, 474.
,, II., ,, 84, 160, 430.
Lugano, 349-50, 7, 75, 413*n*.
Lüttichau, August von, 38, 45, 175, 236, 307, 65, 86*n*, 96-403, 34; Ida, his wife, 7.

M.

Magdala, 470.
Magdeburg, 151, 352, 9*n*.
Maistre, de, 186.
Malibran, 280*n*.
Mantius, Berlin reg. (? lately tenor—see vol. ii), 356.
Marches, processional, 155, 370, 511-512.
Maria Paulowna, 179, see Weimar.
Mariafeld by Zurich, 272, 322, 430-6.
Marr, Weimar reg., 404.
Marschall, see Bieberstein.
Martigny, 350.
Mayence, 372.
"Max Waldau," 483.
M'Carthy, J. H., 428*n*.
Megrim, Wagner's, 410-5.
Méhul, 106; *Joseph*, 76, 162.
Meinck, E., *Sag. Grundl.*, 323*n*, 32-334, 425*n*.
Meilen, Lake of Zurich, 431.
Meiringen, 347, 9, 57.
Meissner, Alfred, 323.
Meister, The, 96*n*, 103*n*, 428*n*.
MEISTERSINGER, DIE, 123, 4, 240, 265*n*, 423, 510; sketch, 494*n*, 509.
Melody, 96, 105, 9-10, 2, 4, 8, 26-31, 138, 42, 368; "continuous," 140-1; "*no*," 476, 86, 92, 4, cf. 314, 488, 499.
Mendelssohn, Felix, 71, 86, 179, 289, 339*n*, 478; conductor, 73, 305-6, 41; Wagner on, 89-91, 102, 113, 35, 70, 305-6; *Walpurgis*, 341.
Mer de Glace, 350.
Meser, C. F., 172, 246, 79*n*, 388.
Meyerbeer, 6, 35, 60, 88, 95-6, 191, 340, 51, 86, 400-1, 85, 7; Wagner on, 6, 36, 87, 9, 91, 5-8, 102, 11-7, 148-9, 207, 366, 92; *Dinorah* and *Etoile*, 401; *Huguen.*, 96, 114-7; *Prophète*, 34-5, 88, 96, 115-6, 401; *Robert*, 115, 52.
Michaelson, agent, 359, 91.
Milde, v., baryt., 54, and wife, 341.
Milk, 348.
Mill, Stuart, 433.
Mime (*Ring*), 422, 42-6.
Minna, see Wagner.
Mitterwurzer, Anton, 502.
Mommsen, Theodor, 271.
Monatsschrift, Deutsche, 17, 37, 82, 85, 146-7, 66, 479*n*, 80.
"Monumental, the," 83, (154), 171, 223-4, 7-8, 30, 62, 479-80, 500.
Moral of a drama, 121, 52, 252, 327, 425, 42, 55, 94.
Moritz, Frau (Koeckel's sister), 354-6, 372, 5, 91.
Morra, Josephine, sopr., 279-80*n*.
Moscheles, I., 94, 197.
Mosengeil, 288.
Mosewius, J. T., 391.
Mozart, 26, 477, 85; spinet, 185; Symphonies, 290; Wagner on,

102, 7-8: *Così fan tutte*, 108, 292*n*; *Don Giov.*, 102, 7, 8, 18, 196—W. revises, 75-6, 8, 108; *Figaro*, 76, 108, 280*n*; *Titus*, 108; *Zauberflöte*, 76.
Müller, Alex., Zurich, 4, 8-11, 7, 277, 89; daughters, 10.
Müller, Franz, Weimar, 62.
,, Capt. H., 247, 498.
Munich, 160, 307; Court-theatre, 24, 62, 298*n*, 371, 2, 89, 512-3.
Münzer, G., 495.
"Music of the Future," 19, 118, 224, 476-7, 87.
Musik, Die, 79*n*, 201*n*, 354*n*, 88*n*, 410*n*, 509.
Myth in Drama, 119, 20, 2-3, 238, 240, 4, 51-2, 7, 331, 420, 42-3, 7, 471, 90-1, 4; *versus* Legend, 123, 329, 32-3*n*, 418, 52, 76.

N.

Nägeli, H. G., 264.
Naples, 320.
Napoleon I., 281,
,, III., 181.
National, Paris, 16, 79.
National-Zeitung, 317, 80, 491.
Nationality, 15, 89-90, 3, 108, 11, 154, 62, 81, 201.
Naumburg, 197.
Nerval, Gérard de, 52, 62, 490*n*.
Neue freie Presse, 287, 324*n*.
Neue Oderzeitung, 198*n*, 483.
Neue Zeitschrift für Musik, 17, 24, 62, 88, 92, 157*n*, 65, 6, 9*n*, 91, 198*n*, (215), 300-2, 4, 6, 35*n*, 41, 348, 51, 63, 9*n*, 78, 80, 1*n*, 400, 401, 3-4, 83.
Neujahrsblatt, Zurich, see Steiner.
"New works," 138*n*, 43, 54, 61-3, 223-4, 7-30, 309, 36-7, 60, 453.
Nibelheim, 414, 9-22.
Nibelungen, Schnorr's designs, 460*n*.
NIBELUNGEN, see RING.
Nibelungenlied, 259, 71, 329, 33.
Nicholas I., Russia, 179, 83-4, 335, 337.
Nietzsche, F., 14, 20, 87, 426.
Nirvana, 299-300.
Norns, 479; in *Gtdg*, 436, 41, 50, 454.
Nourrit, Alfred, tenor, 117*n*.
Nutt, D., pub., 333*n*.

O.

Odessa, 183, 92.
Odur, 418, 9*n*.
Œdipus myth, 120, 47*n*.
Opera, 54-5, 88, 94-119, 31, 7, 9, 42, 148-9, 309, 13-4, 8, 66-7, 476, 85-7, 492, 4; "Grand," 114, 51-2, 230, 450; light, 154, 62; origin of, 103-5. See also French, Ital.
Orchestration, 53, 5, 9, 61, 109, 11, 114, 31-43, 51, 202, 83, 92, 309-311, 29, 38*n*, 9*n*, 69-70, 452, 3, 471, 6, 86, 8, 96, 9; "Carolynian," 181, 8; Liszt's early, 201*n*.
Ortrud (*Loh.*), 56, 182, 451, 510, 1.
Ötlishausen, 66, 8, 71, 2, 4.
Ott-Imhof, Zurich, 280.
Ottensoser, Dr, Zurich, 317.

P.

Paganini, 296.
Palestrina, 103.
Pallanza, 345, 9.
Papo, parrot, death, 145-6, (457).
Paris, 4, 18, 25, 35, 80, 150, 99, 204, 218, 147*n*, 69, 96, 321, 35, 92-3, 473: concerts proposed, 8, 26, 8, 33, 79, 394; Conservatoire, 26, (28), 33, 79*n*, 471-2; coup d'état, 498; Opéra, 8, 9, 27-9, 34, 7-9, 95, 111, 51, 337, 93-5, 470, 7; Wagner in, 5-10, 3, 27-42, 4, 7*n*, 64*n*, 458, 70-3.
PARSIFAL, 123, 4, 240, 89, 366, 443, 449*n*, (491).
Passport, 4*n*, 36, 358, 469-70, 2.
Pecht, Friedrich, 21.
Peps, dog, 349, 94.
Peri's *Eurydice*, 103-4.
Perry, Commodore, 10.
Philipront, Brussels, 80.
Philistines, 12, 41, 59, 93, 143-4, 99, 219, 30, 316, 46, 9, 78.
Pianoforte, 16, 8, 109, 23, 79, 85, 435.
Pichon, baryt., 288, 313-5, 499.
Pillet, Léon, 470.
Plaidy, L., 94.
Planer, Natalie (Minna's sister), 46, and parents, 376, 99.
Play, the spoken, 118-9, 23, 50, 3-4, 156, 9.
Poet and Musician, 23, 132*n*, 40, 2, 144, 301-3, 456, 76, 85, 7, 9, 99.
Pohl, Richard, 403-4.
Poland, 181, 3, 90.
Police, 36-7, 150, 75, 265*n*, 344, 58, 389-90, 472, 501.
Politics, 11-3, 29, 49, 66, 155-6, 75-

176, 82, 247-8, 65*n*, 8, 71, 6, 431, 432, 72. See also Art.
Porges, Heinrich, 289.
Praeger, Ferd., 93; *Wagner as I knew him*, 274*n*, 496-7.
Prague, 497; theatre, 358, 90.
Preller, F., painter, 182.
Presse, Paris, 62.
Programme-music, 113, 35, 281, 91, 295, 8.
Programmes, concert, 279-80, 6-93, 298*n*, 339-41, 96*n*.
Prölss, Robert, 401.
Prussia, 10, 114; Royal family, 51, 380, 1, 3, 4, 6.
Public, musical and theat., 54-5, 8-9, 91, 8*n*, 110, 5, 43-4, 50-3, 96-7, 9, 230, 56, 83, 7, 94-5, 307, 13-6, 8, 327, 30, 41, 54, 60-2, 78, 90-2, 9, 400, 1*n*, 5-6, 20, 48, 76, 7, 84, 7, 501-3; the ideal, 24, 31, 59, 143, 153, 227, 9, 37, 53, 61, 94, 336*n*, 393, 456, 85.
Pusinelli, Anton, 30-1, 263-4, 8.

R.

Racine, 119, 270.
Raff, Joachim, 62, 79*n*, 201*n*, 5, 9, 219, 20*n*, 341, 54*n*, 60, 1; *König Alfred*, 161, 96, 209*n*, 340, 1, 3, 360.
Ragnarok, 333.
Rahn-Escher, Dr, 464.
Ramann, L., 98*n*, 117*n*, 80, 3*n*, 5, 190, (207).
Rauch-Wernau, sopr., 64, 76-8, 288, 292*n*, 313-5, 499.
Rausse, hydrologist, 245, 348, 427.
Reading-rehearsals, 56, 367.
Recitative, 103-9, 39, 355, 68-9, 476, 486, 99.
Reissiger, Gottlieb, 5, 282, 351, 6, 372, 92, 5-6, 8, 401, 3, 70, 502-3; *Weber's last thought* (?), 288.
Reithard, J. J., Zurich, 316-7.
Reuil near Paris, 7-9.
Revolution, 12-5, 24, 9, 83, 115, 44, 155, 77, 247-9, 53-4, 392, 427, 31, 493, 8, cf. 235, 484.
Revue des deux Mondes, 490*n*.
RHEINGOLD, see RING.
Rheinische Musikzeitung, 341.
Rhine, 265*n*; theatre by, 249, 53, 261.
Rhine-daughters, 252, 350, 84, 423, 424, 7, 44, 9.
Riehl, W. H., 95-6, 9, 102, 3, 12.
RIENZI, 48, 54, 61, 96, 115, 64, 70, 179, 338, 52, 60, 70, 81, 3, 489; Liszt proposes for Paris, 38, 395; overt., Paris (not performed), 28*n*, 33.
Rietz, Julius, 94, 373-8.
Riga theatre, 151, 352, 9, 89-90.
Rigi, the, 51.
"Rinderknecht," 321-6, 45, 7, 56.
Ring, the, 332, 422*n*, 4-5, 42, 9, 52.
RING DES NIBELUNGEN, DER:—
Evolution of, 98-9, 141, 56*n*, 74, 177, 220, 2, 34*n*, 7-8, 40, 3-4, 249-62, 73, 318-23, 9-31, 45, 50, 402, 9, 17-9, 36-56.
Liszt on, 259-60, 343, 95.
Music, 140, 268, 417, 23, 56.
Printing, 327*n*, 406, 13, 38, 96, 505, 6.
Title, 258, 412, 4, 7.
Wagner estimates, 257-9, 414, 5, 417, 27-8, 36, 65, cf. 463.
Rheingold, Das, 122, 249, 51, 2, 258, 443-4:—
Draft, 320, 3, 31, 45, 413, 7-9.
Music, 413*n*, 20, 2, 4, 5*n*, 507.
Poem, 328, 30, 1, 2, 50, 410-30, 5, 442, 5, 52; Diction of, 270, 421-422, 7, 54, 6; Wagner on, 413, 415.
Scenery, 420, 3-4.
Walküre, Die, 100, 22, 249, 51, 252, 6, 7, 443-4:—
Draft, 318, 20, 2, 456.
Music, 138-9, 324-6; Ritt-motiv, 328, 436.
Poem, 322-34, 45, 415, 22, 5, 6, 438, 42, 3, 5, 7, 51, 4, 5-6; Death-herald scene, 265, 323*n*; Diction, 270, 324-5, 421: Fricka scene, a variant, 326-7*n*; Wagner on, 322, 4-7, 443.
Siegfried, 100, 22, 299, 318:—
Genesis of, (83), 163, 214, 34*n*, 7-241, 4, 436*n*, 7, 94-5.
Music, 135*n*, 41, 445*n*, 54, 6; contemplated in '51, 237, 8, 42, 243, 4, 50, 1, 7.
Original poem (of '51), 121*n*, 67, 240-2, 4, 51-2, 5-7, 330, 1, 436*n*, 437, 40*n*, 3-9; Wagner on, 241-244; Woodbird, 439, 52.
Present poem, 301, 28, 9, 422, 9; Diction, 270, 444, 6*n*, 7-8.
Revision of poem in '52, 331, 415, 417, 35-6, 9, 42-50; later, 445.
Weimar proposal, 237-9, 42-3, 50, 253, 6-7, 9, (343), 437, 95.

RING, *continued*—
Götterdämmerung, 329, 419 (for earlier history, see 'Siegfried's Tod'—the poem's original title):—
Diction, 438, 40*n*, 1, 8*n*, 54, 94.
Endings, 254, 429-30, 6, 42, 9, 54-455, 65.
Music, 423, 50, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.
Revision of poem in '52, 331, 415, 417, 35-6, 9, 50-6; earlier (interim), 438-41, 3*n*, (453).
Second Act, 451-3.
Title, change of, 449*n*, 54.
Ritter, Alex., 31, 42*n*, 52, 165, 364.
,, Julie (mother), 30-2, 40-2, 7, 52, 70, 147, 9, 205, 26*n*, 34, 40*n*, 243, 50, 3, 4, 60, 4, 6, 86*n*, 92, 6, 308, 9, 18, 9*n*, 75, 406, 57*n*, 62, 3; daughters, 42, 52, see Kummer.
Ritter, Karl (eldest son of Frau Julie), 30-1, 42, 8, 52, 6-7, 64, 7, 70-4, 7, 83, 92, 9, 206, 10, 26*n*, 47, 9*n*, 254, 86*n*, 439.
Roeckel, August, 36, 248, 71, 3; sister, 354; wife, 429; plot, 469: *Letters to*, 167-8, 239*n*, 76*n*, 408, 410, 21, 5, 6, 9, 48, 99.
Roger, G. H., French tenor, 393-4.
Rollet, Dr Hermann, 287, 323-5.
"Rome," 157, 61, 82-5, 215-6, 20-1, 482-3.
Rooy, Anton van, 330.
Rossini, 26, 95, 110-1, 48-9, 62: *Barbiere*, 75, 6; *Tell*, 111, 279*n*.
Rostock, 354.
Roth, baryt., Zurich, 279*n*.
Rothschild, 32; ironic burglary, 346.
Rubinstein, Anton, 188*n*.
Rudolstadt strollers, 358.
Rue de Provence, Paris, 33, 472.
Ruskin, John, 117.
Russia, 25, 31, 182-4, 389-90; Empress, 335, 46. See Nicholas.

S.

S. Chrysostom, 187.
S. Gallen, 73, 7, 206*n*, 81, 3; Wagner at, 78,
S. Margaret, 202.
S. Petersburg, 296, 389.
Sachs, see Hans.
Sand, George, 98*n*, 189, 229*n*, 68.
Santen Kolff, J. van, 253*n*, 339*n*.
Säntis, 249.
Scenery: natural, 48, 168*n*, 249, 321-322, 45, 7-50, 478; stage, 22, 114, 116, 9, 36, 51-2, 420, 75—see *Tann.* &c.
Schaffhausen, 292.
Schelling, F. W. J. von, 21.
Schiller, 118, 9, 23*n*, see Goethe.
Schindelmeisser, Louis, 356, 71-2.
Schladebach, J., 171, 339, 52.
Schleswig-Holstein, 431,
Schlösser, Dr Rudolf, 28*n*.
Schmidt (C. S.?), Leipzig dir, 310-1.
,, Gustav, Frankfort cond., 195, 353, 5.
Schneider, F., 164; *Last Judgment*, 340.
Schnorr, Julius, painter, 460*n*.
Schöll, 157.
Schöneck, cond., 282, 307, 8, 10, 92; wife, 313*n*.
Schopenhauer, 20, 2, 87, 271, (299), 333; on *Ring*, 327, 31.
Schreck, Frl. F., 341.
Schrenk, Zurich band, 280*n*.
Schröder-Devrient, 247, 363-4, 98, 498.
Schubert, 26, 190.
Schulze, Dr Florenz, 463, 97-9.
Schumann, Clara, 188.
,, Robt, 86, 117, 91, 241, 269: *Faust*, 339*n*; *Genovefa*, 188.
Schwerin theatre, 247, 353-5; see *Holl.*, *Tann.*
Schwyz, 413.
Scotland, 21.
Scribe, Eugène, 115, 7*n*, 452.
Seghers, François, 33, 79.
Semper, Gottfried, 7, 35, 149, 60, 271, 7, 472-5.
Seneca's tragedies, 104*n*.
Senta (*Holl.*), 190, 313, 6, 406.
Sesostris, 189.
Seville cathedral, 259, 62.
Seydelmann, cond., 390, 1.
Shakespeare, 14, 23*n*, 105, 19-20, 3, 189, 270, 90: *Hamlet*, 120, 328, 332; *Lear*, 120; *Macbeth*, 120, 420; *Tempest*, 122.
Shelley, 270, 99.
Sidelhorn, 347.
Siegfried (in *Ring*), 238, 329-31, 45, 425-6, 40-2, 4, 7-9, 52-5.
Siegfried's Tod, 98, 123, 6, 230, 8, 40, 241, 4, 51-2, 6, 329, 30, 1, 436-441, 7, 9, 53, 4, 94, 510:—
Götterdämmerung, see RING.
Liszt on, 237, 9.
Music to be written, 8, 19*n*, 26, 7, 59-60, 3-4, 8, 83, 211, 22-6, 30-233, 6, 8, 51, 436, 7, 9.
Printer, withdrawn, 39, 222, 5, 438.
Read aloud, Zurich, 233-4, 8*n*, 439.

Siegfried's Tod, continued—
Weimar proposal, 39, 50, 63, 173-175, 211, 23-6, 31-7, 43, 56, 437, 476; fee for, 211, 23, 25, 35-7, 254-5.
Siegmund, 285, 329-30, 2, 442; and Sieglinde, 121*n*, 265, 326, 7, 30, 443, 6*n*.
Signale f. d. mus. Welt, 62, 341, 500.
Simrock, Carl, 328.
Solger, Reinhold, 146*n*.
Sondershausen, 339.
Sophocles, 14, 119, 328.
Spear, Hagen's, 441.
,, Wotan's, 332, 425, 46*n*.
Spiller von Hauenschild, Georg, 483.
Spohr, Louis, 44, 289, 352, 9*n*.
,, Rosalie (niece), 340.
Spontini, 106, 11; death, 149: *Vestale*, 149, overture, 280.
Spring, 64, 149, 231, 3, 4, 5, 40, 73, 307, 19, 20, 46.
Spyri, B. L., 11, 65, 277-9, 87, 8, 314. See also *Eidg. Ztg.*
Stabreim, 124, 8-32, 432, 3, cf. 494.
Stahr, Adolf., 25, 160*n*, 87, 97, 270; on *Loh.*, 201*n*, 484, 91-2, 6; Wagner's letter to, 45*n*, 239, 493-6.
Steche, Leipzig lawyer, 376-7.
Steiger, Robert, 12.
Steiner-Schweizer, A., 64*n*, 233-4*n*, 247*n*, 65*n*, 7, 79*n*, 80, 2, 92*n*, 302, 313*n*, 6*n*, 472.
Stern's academy, Berlin, 339-40.
Sterne's *Sentim. Journey*, 478.
Stettin theatre, 359.
Strasser, Dresden, 498, 9.
Stör, Weimar, 212.
Sturm und Koppe, 373-4.
Sulzer, Jakob, 4*n*, 11, 7*n*, 233-4*n*, 238*n*, 96*n*, 349, 77, 475; Wagner's letters to, 11, 35, 233, 67, 472-3.
Supernatural in drama, the, 121-2, 136, 8, 451-3, 92.
Swadilfari myth, 419.
Swinburne, 189.
Symphony, 137, 40-1; W.'s early, 311*n*.

T.

"Tannenberg," Zurich, 10, 7.
TANNHÄUSER, 63-4*n*, 263, 98-9, 327, 52 *et seq.*:—
Breslau success, 356, 8, 72*n*, 5, 90-391, 400.
Cuts, 225, 65*n*, 361-2, 6, 8, 98, 405.
Dresden perfs.: orig., 55, 197, 352, 353, 60-8, 86, 92-3, 8, 405, 89, 501; resumed, 364, 85*n*, 6*n*, 95-400, 4, 501-4.
Endings, 172, 359, 62, 7, 8, 88, 98, 405, 502.
Fees for, 247, 349, 54, 6-9, 74-81, 389, 406-7, 26, 34, 59.
Frankfort, 195, 349, 53, 5, 7, 9*n*, 388, 9.
Franz (Robt) on, 484, 5.
Guide, see LITER.
Hero, 364, 6, 8*n*, 94.
Leipzig, 355, 7, 9*n*, 71-8, 88.
Liszt on, 5, 215-7, 383, 94, 405, 471, 89.
Lohengrin-Cellini gala, 337-8.
Non-performances: Berlin, 51, 356, 379-88, 95, 434; Hanover, 359; Munich, 298*n*, 372, 89; Paris, 38, 393-5; Prague, 358, 90; Wurzburg, 357.
Overture, 297-9, 369, 427; Liszt on, 215-7, 341, 471—pfte 281; Uhlig on, 167, 215.
Overture perfd: Ballenstedt, 339-342: Munich, 298*n*, 389; Paris, 26, 8*n*, 33, 9-40, 79-80: Utrecht, 369*n*; Zurich, 273, 92-7, 308, 432.
Performances: Cassel, 406; Cologne, 358, 9*n*; Dantzig, 359; Düsseldorf, 357, 8, 9; Freiburg-i-B., 392; Hamburg, 389; Königsberg, 359; Pesth, 365; Riga, 359, 89-90; Stettin, 359—and other towns, 359*n*.
Scenery, &c., 57*n*, 362, 70, 5, 405, 506, 10.
Schwerin success, 247, 353-6, 68, 372*n*, 3, 9, 90.
Scores, full, 266, 311, 65, 73, 5-7, 379, 82, 6-8, 484, 5; "Hailstorm," 353, 7, 9, 67, 406; revision, 265, 359, 61, 462:—pianoforte, 172, 362, 88*n*.
Textbooks, 172, 388, 9.
Wagner estimates, 169, 359-60, 71, 408, 93.
Weimar perfs., 5, 25, 43, 51, 6*n*, 57*n*, 79*n*, 133*n*, 93, 5, 8*n*, 210, 225, 335, 7, 53, 4, 61-2, 6, 90, 405*n*, 6, 76, 89; "restoration," 338, 61-2, 71, 404-6.
Wiesbaden success, 356, 7, 71-2, 389, 90, 1.
Tappert, Wilhelm, 388*n*.
Tarnhelm and potion, *Ring*, 452-3.

Taubert, Wilhelm, 384, 6.
Telramund (*Loh.*), 508, 9, 10.
Tempo, 51, 306, 69, 404.
Thalberg, S., 98*n*.
Theatre, 123, 50, 2, 8-9, 307, 18, 420, 54: Court-, 150, 359, 80, 9, 403, 7, 504; "Original," 150, 154-6, 9-63; Reform, 6, 13, 23*n*, 55-6, 9, 119, 42, 50, 3, 8-63, 77, 219, 24, 54, 6, 489, 511. See also German.
Theatre, Festival, 226-31, 49, 53, 61, 276, 96.
Thorwaldsen, 158.
Thun, 42, 5, 6, 505.
Tichatschek, Joseph, 23*n*, 54, (55), 167, 345*n*, (361), 362-6, 98, 403, 405*n*, (407), 502-4.
Tiefenau, Lake of Zurich, 407.
Times, 500.
Todt, Karl, 12.
Tone-painting, 135-6, (450), 486.
Tone-poems, 301-6, 417.
Tribschen, Lucerne, 303.
Tristan u. Isolde, Gottfried's, 328.
TRISTAN UND ISOLDE, 123, 4, 274, 299, 328, 9, 446, 50, 2.

U.

Ufenau, Lake of Zurich, 435.
UHLIG, THEODOR, 17, 29-30, 41, 52, 56, 92, 101, 46, 8, 63-9, 71-3, 6, 216, 26, 43, 65, 300*n*, 10*n*, 48, 57-359, 98-9, 404, 11, 57, 61, 83:—
Appearance and temperament, 164-165, 459-61.
Illness, 48, 167, 73, 245, 414, 28*n*, 456-; death, 463-4.
Letters to, 17, 164, 5, 73*n*, 251*n*, 253*n*, 86*n*, 410*n*, 1, 28, 56*n*, 7, 461-3, *et passim*.
Visit to Wagner, 120-1*n*, 47, 163, 167-8, 240*n*, 1, 3, 5, 7, 68, 439, 459, 78-81; proposed second, 308, 434, 57, 9, 63.
Wife, 399, 461, 3; and child, 427, 456*n*, 9.
Writings, 17, 24, 62, 88, 164-6, 215, 70, 2, 304*n*, 51, 63*n*, 81*n*, 400, 81.
Union musicale, Paris, 33, 79.
University Street, London, 474.
Uri-Rothstock, 167.
Utrecht mus. soc., 369.

V.

Vaez, Gustave, 8, 28, 9, 34.
Valkyries, 422, 36.
Venice, 274, 412.
Venus (*Tann.*), 299, 405*n*, 502.
Verdi, 96*n*; *Attila*, 279*n*.
Verse, 104, 7, 20, 4-8, 42, 243, 4, 301-3, 20, 2, 4-5, 422, 77, 94; Greek, 125, 291, 305, 6.
Vienna, 389.
Vieuxtemps, Henri, 393, 413.
"Villa Rienzi," 48.
Villeneuve, 42.
Vois, composer, 280*n*.
Volksblätter, 13; *Vereinigte*, 47*n*.
Volsungasaga, 253, 320.
Voltaire, 142.

W.

Wagner, Albert (R.'s brother), (153), 381-2, 5.
Wagner, Francisca (A.'s daughter), 42*n*, 76*n*, 83.
Wagner, Johanna (A.'s daughter), 26, 42*n*, 381-2, 6, 7, 94.
Wagner, Johanna (R.'s mother), 4, 69.
Wagner, Minna (R.'s first wife), 3, 8-9, 10, 6, 7, 8, 27, 32, 5, 41, 6-8, 51, 71, 3, 101, 46, 67, 246-7, 64-7, 272-6, 322, 49-50, 6, 76, 93, 432, 434, 72, 3; parents, 47*n*, 376, 99.
WAGNER, RICHARD, 170:—
Animals, 145, 349, 434.
Appearance, 4*n*, 35-6.
Childless, 10, 146, 266, 74-5, 434, 435.
Christianity, 15-6, 94, 112, 21, 5, 216, 33, 330*n*, 490, 3-4.
Conductor, 64-5, 73-8, 277-97, 304, 8, 14-6, 470, 99, cf. 368-9.
Country-life, 4, 84-5, 249, 318, 21-322, 48, 433-4.
Death (on), 20, 47, 101, 46, 9, 264-5, 75, 84-5, 99, 416, 7, 34, 455, 64-5.
Diet, 245-6, 67, 321, 48, 85, 410, 416, 60-1. See Water-cure.
Domesticity, 8, 18, 46, 8, 74, 101, 145-6, 263-6, 72, 322, 76, 406, 433-4, 59-60.
Drawing, 46, 505-6, 8-9; colouring, 510.
Exile, 3, 7, 12, 35*n*, 49, 61, 168, 220, 38, 48, 59, 60, 5, 343-4, 362, 7, 70, 83, 90, 7, 408, 17, 69-470, 2, 7, 501-3.
General characteristics and traits, 4, 6-12, 20-1, 7, 9, 35*n*, 7, 50*n*,

WAGNER, RICHARD, *continued*—
58-9, 68-70, 3, 88, 97, 117, 45, 168*n*, 70*n*, 6, 214, 23, 8, 30*n*, 235, 48, 54, 63-7, 9-70, 4, 6, 81, 284, 90*n*, 308, 10*n*, 5, 7, 36, 45-350, 66-7, 70, 3-4, 8, 84, 90, 402, 7, 33-5, 58, 60-5, 73, 95-6, 506, 8-11.
Ghosts, 50, 284.
Gratitude, 4, 26-7, 30, 41, 50-1, 62, 91, 2, 166, 74-5, 203, 14, 6, 235, 50, 60, 86*n*, 339, 41-3, 64-365, 99, 495, 503, 4.
Health, 18, 32-3, 4, 7, 9, 41, 7*n*, 48, 145, 8, 68-9, 73, 241, 4-7, 9, 258, 61, 3, 6-8, 82, 5, 9, 308, 318-21, 46-8, 50, 63, 88-9, 93, 409-16, 20-1, 30, 5, 53, 6, 9, 64, 470, 3.
Hospitality, 48, 73, 167, 266, 72, 322, 65, 434, 59-60.
Insomnia, 33, 4, 318, 430, 506.
Loneliness, 36, 42, 6, 86, 144, 68-169, 210, 72, 82, 4-5, 92, 318, 344, 9, 74, 94, 417, 32, 64-5, 506.
Manuscripts, unpubd letters, &c., 11, 33*n*, 5*n*, 8*n*, 41, 7*n*, 50*n*, 76, 148, 67, 240*n*, 324, 58*n*, 379*n*, 438-41, 4, 57*n*, 79-80, 505, 507, 10.
"Master," 279, 87.
Money-matters, 6, 7, 9, 11, 5, 7*n*, 18, 25-6, 9-32, 4, 40-1, 7*n*, 146, 147, 205, 11, 23, 6-7, 9, 31, 2, 234-7, 47, 50, 4-5, 64-6, 9, 76, 280, 4, 6, 96, 309, 11*n*, 2, 6, 21, 345, 9, 52, 8, 60, 72-3, 5-6, 81-2, 385, 93, 5, 406-7, 34, 59-61, 70, 505.
Morning-work, 99, 101, 322, 6, 412-5, 58.
Pianoforte, 10, 6, 8, 435.
Portrait, 35-6.
Posterity, 223, 8, 378, 414, cf. 500.
Publication-venture, 31, 246, 316, 352, 88, 408, cf. 505-6.
Reading, 94, 265, 70, 2, 323, 49, 412, 26, 9, 33; aloud, 18, 101, 233-4, 8*n*, 42, 439.
"Rest," 8, 9, 169, 249, 63, 307, 318, 21, 47, 50, 412, 6, 33-4.
Rowing, 48, 350, 435.
Singing, 23*n*, 324, 6.
Smoking, 233, 349.
Travel, 4-6, 32, 40-2, 6-7, 248, 320, 35, 45-50, 93, 4, 410-1, 3, 415, 30, 72.
WAGNER, RICHARD, *continued*—
Walks, 42, 83, 101, 67, 246, 9, 64, 322, 3, 46, 7-8, 56, 410, 3-4, 6, 430, 5.
Weeping, 146, 214.
and Young talent, 9-11, 42, 64-77, 153-5, 64-7, 227, 30, 77-9, 82, 287*n*, 91*n*, 5, 307, 17*n*, 92, 404, 457-8, 61, 4, 75.
Wagner-cycle, first, 406, cf. 170, 276, 307, 73.
Wagner-Jahrbuch, 35*n*.
Wagner-literature, 44*n*, 62, 165, 215, 273-5, 323-4, 32-3*n*, 442.
Wahnfried, 240*n*, 74*n*.
Wala, the, 443, see Erda.
Waldheim prison, 168*n*, 248, 410, 29, 470, 97-9.
Walhall, 99, 177, 249, 323*n*, 30, 2, 449, 54, 65; building of, 418-9, 24, 433.
WALKÜRE, DIE, see RING.
Wallenstatt, Lake of, 430.
Wallis, 347, 50.
Waltraute scene, (436), 450, 1, 4-5.
Wanderer (*Ring*), 6, 240, 331, 429, 440*n*, 3-8; see also Wotan.
Warrant of arrest, 7, 397, 469.
Wartburg, 469.
Wate myth, 479, 80, 1.
Water cure, (48), 148, 244-8, 66-8, 285, 320, 1, 45, 54, 414, 27, 59, 98.
Watzdorf, von, 469.
Weather, 32, 239, 306, 21, 6*n*, 46, 349, 412-5, 30, 5.
Weber, Carl Maria von, 7, 109-10, 7, 118*n*, 62: *Euryanthe*, 76, 109—ov., 280; *Freischütz*, 65, 73, 5, 109, 220; *Jubilee* ov., 281.
Weber, J. J., pub., 99, 146-8, 72, 6, 210, 1.
WEIMAR, 12, 52, 62-3, 173-6, 92, 210, 8-21, 4-6, 31, 4, 60, 1, 351, 6, 469, 77:—
Gd Duchess, Maria Paulowna, 49, 50*n*, 3*n*, 179, 83, 5, 93-4, 6, 223, 33, 5-6, 42, 406, 69.
Gd Duke, Carl Friedrich, 179, 93, 223.
Her^y Gd Duchess, 197, 8, 239, 57, 308.
Her^y Gd Duke, Carl Alexander, 5, 52, 3*n*, 185*n*, 97, 8, 218, 39, 257.
Theatre, 58, 62, 156, 60-3, 78-80, 193, 5-7, 209*n*, 18-20, 35-8, 42, 250, 3, 5-7, 334-8, 43, 5*n*, 53, 5, 404-7, 505. See *Loh.*, *Tann.*

Weiss, Dresden bass, 502.
Weixlstorfer, tenor, 502.
Wenzel, Leipzig Cons., 94.
Wernsdorf, J., 84*n*, 470.
Wesendonck, Mathilde and Otto, 32, 273-6, 85*n*, 93, 6*n*, 322, 58, 434: Wagner's letters to O., 274-6, 345, 347, 9, 69*n*.
Weston, Miss J. L., *Legends of the Wagner Drama*, 333*n*, 419*n*.
Wieland der Schmiedt, 28-9, 32, 4, 38-9, 86, 120*n*, 418, 9*n*; offered to Berlioz, 337; to Liszt, 188, 204, 241, 2.
Wiesbaden theatre, 356, 71-2.
Wigand, Otto, pub., 16, 8-21, 32-4, 83, 222, 438.
Wilhelm I. of Germany, 384*n*.
Wille, Eliza: *Remin.*, 48, 87, 269-272, 322-3, 430-5; Wagner's letters to, 322, 430, 1.
Wille, François (husband), 430-5.
Winter, 18, 32, 230, 45, 320, see Weather.
Winterthur, 292.
Wirsing, Leipzig dir, 375-8.
Wittgenstein, P^ss^ Carolyne v. Sayn-, 25, 6, (43, 4), 54, 161, 8, 78, 80-221, 231*n*, 41, 3, 308, 44, 490: "*Causes*," 482-3; collaborates with Liszt, 157, 160*n*, 80, 5-6, 8-91, 8-203, 7, 8, 212-7, 70*n*, 482, 8, 91, cf. 471; erudition, 181, 7*n*, 219*n*, 482-3; illness, 193-4, 210, 2, 9; letters to Wagner, 54*n*, 6*n*, 182, 9, 257*n*; Liszt's letters to, 5, 178, 87, 9, 91-192, 202*n*, 21, 36-7, 54*n*, 470, 82-483; "longue vue," 212-4, 8, 20, 395.
Wittgenstein, P^ss^ Marie (daughter), 25, 182-4, 7, 92, 3.
Wittgenstein, Prince Nicolaus (husband of C.), 182-4, 202*n*.
Wolfram v. Eschenbach, 491.
Wolzogen, Hans Paul von, 445*n*.
Woman, 30, 41, 2*n*, 100, 18, 28, 201, 239, 72-6, 95, 315, 6, 22, 37, 41, 417, 24, 7-8, 33, 5; the "redeeming," 448-9, 54-5, 65.
Woronince, Poland, 183.
Wotan, 240, 9, 52, 300, 26-34, 66, 417-8, 21-6, 40-9, 54-5.
Wurm (*Ring*), 440*n*.
Wurtemberg, 146*n*.
Wurzburg, 10; theatre, 151, 357.

Y.

Yeddo, 10.

Z.

Zeitschrift, *Neue*, see *N*.
Zermatt, 42.
Zigesar, von, Weimar Intdt, 45, 9, 50*n*, 4, 7-60, 195, 205, 9*n*, 23, 35-237, 9, 54-5, 7, 334, 61.
ZURICH, 4, 8, 47, 231, 47*n*, 61, 73, 276-7, 94-5, 475:—
Allg. Musik-Gesellschaft, 64*n*; concerts, 26, 32, 78, 217, 34, 277-82, 6-97, 303, 12; *Neujahrsblatt*, see Steiner.
Casino, 233, 8*n*, 77, 93*n*.
Concerts, 18, *vid. sup.*; Wagner's proposed, 276, 83-6, 9, 307, 506.
Friends, 11, 47, 271-6, 307-8, 432, 434, 73.
Inhabitants, 48, 150, 6, 227, 72, 6, 282-5, 96, 315-8, 94.
Localities: Café Littéraire, 12; Enge, 48, 495; Escherhäuser, 18, 264-5; Fröschengraben, 10; Kaufhaus, 293; Museum, 392; Polytechnic, 475; Promenade, Hohe, 264; Rennweg, 10; Schanzengraben, 17; Sterngasse, 48; Weinplatz, 12; Zeltweg, 18, 264.
Newspapers, 155, 316-7: *Eidgenöss.*, see *E.*; *Freitagsztg*, 248; *Tagblatt*, 272, 315, 6*n*, 70.
Theatre, 64-5, 8, 71, 3-8, 99, 149-156, 227*n*, 34, 76, 82, 307-18.
University, 35, 227, 71, 473.
Wagner's homes in, 10, 7, 8-9, 35*n*, 48, 264-6, 93*n*, 406, 34.
"Zwangspässe," 357-8.